FROM RUSSIA TO SIAM

WITH A VOYAGE DOWN THE DANUBE

ASIA

ERNEST YOUNG

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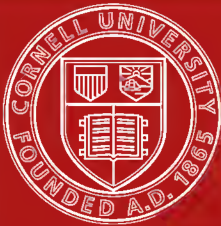

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From Russia to Siam, with a voyage down

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FROM RUSSIA TO SIAM

BAINS-BATHS

FROM RUSSIA TO SIAM

WITH A VOYAGE DOWN THE DANUBE

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL IN MANY LANDS

BY

ERNEST YOUNG

AUTHOR OF "THE KINGDOM OF THE YELLOW ROBE"
"FINLAND" ETC

FULLY ILLUSTRATED

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E. Y.

TO ROSEMARY

CONTENTS

IN RUSSIA — PAGE

I In a Russian Monastery 3

IN HOLLAND

II How to See Holland 39
III A Dutch Cheese Market 44

IN SIAM

IV Holiday-making in Siam 51
V Stage-managed 60

IN CORSICA

VI Where Napoleon was Born .. 75
VII Corté, the old Feudal Capital of Corsica 82
VIII The Valley of the Tavignano .. 90
IX Round about Bonifacio 95
X Where Nelson Lost His Eye .. 102
XI Bastia 111

IN GERMANY

XII Marching through Germany .. 121
XIII A Camp Fire 127

DOWN THE DANUBE

XIV Passau 135
XV Down the Danube to Linz.. .. 141
XVI Linz 148
XVII Linz to Vienna 152
XVIII Between two Capitals 160
XIX Through the Hungarian Plain .. 167
XX Semlin 173

PAGE

XXI Belgrade 180
XXII Belgrade to Galatz 185
XXIII Galatz 191
XXIV The Lower Reaches of the Danube 197

IN ROUMANIA

XXV Galatz to Bucharest 207
XXVI Bucharest 211
XXVII On Speech without Language .. 218

SOMEWHERES EAST OF SUEZ

XXVIII Guardian Demons 225
XXIX Canton 230
XXX Macao 239
XXXI Scenes in Eastern Ports 250
XXXII Night-time in the Tropics .. 257

IN FINLAND

XXXIII A Study of the Fatherland: A Finnish Experiment 263
XXXIV Viborg 280
XXXV A Visit to the Falls of Imatra .. 289
XXXVI Posting in Finland 297
XXXVII Out for the Day: A Trip in the Backwoods of Europe 302
XXXVIII In a Finnish Café 312
XXXIX A Visit to a Finnish Farm .. 318
Epilogue 325

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Rotterdam .. .. *Frontispiece*
The Church of the Transfiguration *Facing page* 6
One of the Smaller Churches : Walamo ,, 6
The Abbot's House : Walamo .. .. ,, 10
The Guest House : Walamo .. .. ,, 10
A Guest Cell at Walamo .. .. .. ,, 16
A Novice .. .. ,, 20
Monks at Walamo .. .. ,, 20
A Russian Monk .. .. ,, 26
At Volendam .. .. ,, 39
A Timber Raft on the Rhine .. .. ,, 40
Dordrecht .. .. ,, 42
In the Market : Haarlem .. .. ,, 44
Selling Oranges : Amsterdam .. .. ,, 44
In the Harbour : Volendam .. .. ,, 46
Porters Carrying Cheeses .. .. ,, 46
Bonifacio .. .. ,, 78
Tenement Houses : Ajaccio .. .. ,, 78
The Town Well : Ajaccio .. .. ,, 80
A Corsican Diligence .. .. .. ,, 80
Washing the Family Linen .. .. ,, 98
A Genoese Fort : Corsica .. .. ,, 98
Sewing on Buttons.. .. .. .. ,, 124
Marching Through Germany : A Camp ,, 130
Tower on the Inn : Passau .. .. ,, 136
Passau : Entrance to the Domhof .. ,, 138
Passau : Street Scene .. .. .. ,, 138
Scenery on the Danube .. .. ,, 158
A Landing Station on the Danube .. ,, 164
The Market : Belgrade .. .. .. ,, 182
Belgrade : Another View of the Market ,, 182

The Theatre: Belgrade .. *Facing page* 184
An Ox Cart: Belgrade .. .. .. ,, 184
Belgrade: Another View of the Market ,, 188
Porters at Rustchuk .. .. .. ,, 188
A Coachman: Galatz .. .. .. ,, 192
A Country Cart: Galatz.. .. .. ,, 192
Galatz: An Ox Cart .. .. .. ,, 194
A Street in Galatz.. .. .. .. ,, 194
Tutrakan .. .. ,, 200
The National Bank: Bucharest .. ,, 212
The River: Bucharest .. .. .. ,, 212
Siam: A Temple Gateway .. .. ,, 226
Siam: Guardian Demons .. .. .. ,, 228
The Castle at Viborg .. .. .. ,, 282
The Saima Canal .. .. ,, 282
Barge Laden with Fuel: Viborg .. ,, 286
A Finnish Hayfield .. .. .. ,, 286
Imatra: the Top of the Falls .. .. ,, 294
In the Finnish Archipelago .. .. ,, 294

IN A RUSSIAN MONASTERY

FROM RUSSIA TO SIAM

I

IN A RUSSIAN MONASTERY

In the north-west corner of the Russian Empire is the Grand Duchy of Finland. Its boundary-line sweeps down through Lake Ladoga in such a way as to include the little island of Walamo, upon which is situated the monastery we are about to visit. Walamo, as represented on an ordinary map, appears to be a single island, but in reality it is an archipelago of forty islands, some of which are little larger than mere rocks. On five or six of these islands are placed the buildings that constitute the monastery. The chief island can be reached from St. Petersburg by a journey taking about ten hours, or from Sortavala, a Finnish town at the head of the lake, in about two and a half hours. My own point of departure was Sortavala.

I had been meditating this visit to the monastery for a long while, but when, on the occasion of my first visit to Finland, I found myself within measurable reach of my goal I began to draw back.

I knew that though the island was in Finnish territory the monks were all Russian, that smoking was forbidden, and that the food was of the plainest possible description. I had intended to go to Walamo one day and return the next. But this the steamer arrangements would not permit. I could leave on the Monday, but return was impossible until the following Friday. Hence the preliminary hesitations, which were reinforced by the fact that, at that time, there was an epidemic of cholera in St. Petersburg.

I thought that my reading of the Finnish timetable might possibly be wrong, and I tried everybody in the hotel whom I thought might be able to throw some light on the subject. I failed miserably. The barmaid of the hotel shed one bright glimmer on the mist, but it was a feeble light and died almost as soon as it was born. She saw me struggling with a handbill, a time-table, two commercial travellers, respectively of German and Swedish nationality, and she said archly, "Me speak English." My heart went out to her at once. Then she added, "Me say, How do you do; I love you; please sit down." I was immediately depressed. She had no concern with my health; she did not love me—at least I had not given her the slightest cause to do anything so desperate; and I did not want to sit down; I wanted to sail away.

By pointing at myself, the dates and hours in the time-table, my luggage, the hall and the porter, I managed to convey the information that I

should leave Sortavala on the Monday morning, go to Walamo, and return the next Friday, and that I wanted my luggage taken out of my room so that I might not have to pay for a room while I was away. I succeeded in conveying my meaning, and I then and now regard the fact as a triumph of eloquent gesticulation.

On the way down to the steamer on the Monday morning, I called at a baker's and bought a pound of biscuits, Huntley & Palmer's—stale ones. I crammed them into my overcoat pocket. My luggage consisted of a very small bag holding my toilet accessories and a sleeping suit, my overcoat, and a camera.

Sortavala lies at the head of Lake Ladoga. So completely does it appear to be shut in by the land that you wonder how the vessel will ever be able to get out of the bay. As you leave the quay the eye seeks everywhere for the exit and finds none. You make random guesses as to the position of the outlet, and each guess in turn proves wrong. At last you pass through a long narrow channel into the broad waters of the lake, a lake that has been familiar to you from your childhood as a broad blue patch upon the map of Russia. It is dotted everywhere with small sailing-boats, usually the property of the Karelians that tribe of Finns that inhabits the eastern part of Finland, and amongst whom have been longest and most vigorously cherished the songs and legends that constitute the glory of ancient Finnish literature.

I was an object of interest to all the passengers on our tiny steamer, as soon as the captain, who possessed a fragmentary knowledge of English, had extracted from me the information that I was going to spend five days at Walamo. Said one, "You can't smoke"; a second, "You can't drink"; and a third, "There are no amusements." The captain touched the tenderest spot of all when he protested in a gloomy voice, "There is nothing to eat at Walamo but bread and salt. You'll die." I persisted in my resolve, and tried to imagine that I was a bold and fearless explorer.

As we reached the little harbour and drew up beside the landing stage, a number of monks appeared. My first impression was a most unfavourable one. Most of the men I saw were of an unsympathetic and uncultured type. The dress was coarse; the hair was long and tangled, for, in imitation of our Lord, no razor or scissors are allowed ever to touch the head. On the whole I thought I had never seen a more revolting uncivilized set of faces. Later on these early impressions were profoundly modified, for, under these coarse, forbidding exteriors, I found the warmest of hearts and the kindest of sympathies.

As I put my foot on the ladder to leave the ship, the captain laid his hand affectionately on my shoulder, saying, "Come wis me to Petersburg." For the last time I wavered, but I was afraid of being thought afraid, so I took up my bag and stepped ashore. I was immediately accosted by a monk, who pointed to the big white guest-house

THE CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION.

ONE OF THE SMALLER CHURCHES: WALAMO.

[*Facing page* 6

and indulged in remarks in Russian. I nodded, that being the only form of reply of which I was then capable. On arrival at the guest-house I was passed on to another monk, who regarded me with what I interpreted as a distinctly unfavourable glance. He took a key and my bag, and I followed him up several flights of stairs to an upper storey, where I was handed over to another cleric, whose appearance was even less kindly than that of his predecessor. We wandered through a series of long, bare corridors, till we came to cell 152. The monk opened the door, motioned me inside, gave me the key and departed. I sat down on the bed, feeling about as lonely and miserable as is possible for a man in the full possession of bodily health and a perfect digestion.

The cell, which was about eighteen feet by seven, contained four beds, a table, an ikon, and two chairs. There was no wash-stand. The pilgrims wash at a common tap and wipe themselves on pieces of coarse brown sacking. There was no evidence that the other beds were likely to be occupied, but the prospect of three Russian peasants as room companions was not exhilarating. It is true that I was the solitary pilgrim who had arrived by steamer from Sortavala that day, but at times there is an enormous influx of visitors. There are two guest-houses, and each would accommodate several hundreds of people. The peasants, from districts where no steamer calls, come over in great rowing boats that will hold as many as two hundred passengers each.

They brave the dangers of the lake and the severe toil of the journey that they may say their prayers and pay their vows in this lonely but charming spot.

There was little to be gained by sitting staring at the four bare walls of my narrow chamber, and as the sun was shining brilliantly I set out for a walk, leaving my camera behind, in case photography should be forbidden by the rules of the institution. I roamed about all the morning and a part of the afternoon, over the park-like little island, with its well-made roads running in many directions through avenues of beautiful trees. In some spots the trees had been felled and green meadows had taken their place. The waters of the lake ran in and out of the land, making ideal bathing-places in a thousand nooks and corners. The water in these secluded spots was still and clear. I sat down to rest, watched the fish and the dragon-flies, and had almost forgotten I was so far from home, when I heard the tread of someone behind me, and turned round to see a long-frocked monk making his way, with a bundle of firewood under his arm, through the trees. He paused a moment, eyed me intently, raised his hat and passed on. I lay down in one spot, for hours as it seemed to me, revelling in the peace and quietness that lay upon the waters like a benediction. Here it is forbidden to smoke, to catch fish, to cut trees, or to make any noise that may disturb the meditations of the devout. The air is undefiled and still, but broken now and

again by the sound of a deep-voiced bell calling out the passing of the hours or proclaiming the duty of prayer. Every day at Walamo is a Sabbath. From time to time a monk passed by, and it was not long before I began to notice that many of them were of a distinctly better type than those I had encountered on the quay. There were thoughtful and scholarly faces amongst them, faces, too, lit with a light born of a grand and serious devotion to a life of simple duty and praise. The effect of this unworldly stillness and atmosphere soon made itself felt upon me. I began to revel in the quiet of it all, and to speculate upon the possibility of remaining at Walamo for the rest of my natural existence. I don't believe I ever felt so completely benevolent and content as I did that afternoon, with the fish and the flies, the flowers and the passing clouds, where the only sounds were the tolling of the bells, the rustling of the leaves, the prattling of the wavelets as they fondled the pebbles, and the almost imperceptible footfall of the men of God as they went to and from their labour.

How long this frame of mind might have continued I do not know, had it not been that hunger made a sudden and forceful demand for immediate relief. I tramped back to the guest-house, wondering when and where I should find the bread and salt that I have been given to understand were to be had in abundance. On reaching my corridor I found a number of boys going into a long room set with tables. There were glasses

on the tables and something brown in the glasses. I followed the boys. In the twinkling of an eye I was seized by the shoulders and bundled out. I had evidently been trespassing. As I stood breathless outside the door, and heard the roars of laughter in the inner room, there was much less gratitude in my heart towards my fellow-men than when I lay sunning myself by the clear waters of the unruffled lake. Presently the door opened and a layman came out. He explained in bad French, much worse than mine, that these boys were Russian schoolboys who were spending their holidays on the island and who took their meals in private. Adults, he said, got their meals in the refectory at a later hour. Unfortunately, I was unable, from his description, to find out where the refectory lay.

As it was a long time till evening I wandered about the corridors making notes. There appeared to be many people spending their holidays in the monastery. They were as much tourists as pilgrims. Children were playing about in the corridors; men and women were hurrying to and fro with teapots and samovars and my thirst grew greater as my hope of quenching it grew less. Outside some of the doors, deposited on the floors, were more samovars and teapots, and I was on the point of running away with the one that stood outside cell 48, when the door opened and my burglarious intentions were frustrated. No. 48 was a good big room with sundry home comforts and a whole family inside it.

THE ABBOT'S HOUSE: WALAMO.

THE GUEST HOUSE: WALAMO.

Facing page 10

I soon got tired of the corridors and the sight of other people's teapots, so I went downstairs, out into the entrance-hall. I don't think that any of the monks that I had encountered up to this point had quite appreciated my visit. It was evident to them that I knew no Russian and was not of the Greek Church. Every monk that I passed scowled at me, and I ran away and got into the flower-garden. There I found a monk, conducting a party of old ladies through the gardens. He was giving them flowers, and cracking jokes, and the air was merry with their laughter. As they approached the bench upon which I was sitting, I resigned my seat to a plump, breathless dame of mature years, and went off to church, where the big bell was tolling for the last service of the day.

At the entrance to the church I met a monk with reddish-yellow hair. He was tall and thin ; his face was marked with smallpox ; his dress was coarse ; there was an objectionable odour about his skin, and a yet more objectionable smell of stale incense smoke saturating his clothes. As I was about to enter that part of the building where service was being held, he placed his hand on my arm and drew me away. His expression was serious but not distinctly unkindly, and I immediately supposed that, as I was a heretic, he wanted to prevent me entering and so defiling the sacred edifice. He beckoned me to follow him, and not knowing what might happen if I refused, I went like a lamb. We mounted by winding stone

staircases and steep wooden ladders, from storey to storey of the tall tower that dominates the island.

I was faint with hunger and thirst, and dizzy and breathless with the climb; but the first view through the window at the top of the tower, dispelled, for the moment, all disagreeable sensations, for in front and around lay the broad, shining expanse of the Ladoga Sea, and at my feet the dainty little islands that form the Walamo archipelago. The monk—in future I shall refer to him as my monk—produced several telescopes and insisted on showing me their wonderful powers. I fully appreciated his kindness, and tried, by my looks and gestures, to show what I thought both about the view and the telescopes. I looked so pleased that he smiled! That was the first smile that I had seen on the island, and there was so much kindness in it that I could almost have hugged the man who owned it.

As my red-haired friend seemed so obliging I thought I might try a little Finnish on him. Few Russian peasants understand Finnish, but I produced a phrase-book and hunted up "Will you please give me some water?" for by this time my mouth and throat were as dry as a new-baked brick. We did not get very far, for apparently my guide could not find any answer that would fit. His knowledge of Finnish was very imperfect; mine was more so. We skirmished about each other with any sentences that we could make applicable, and, in due time, I got

him to understand that I wanted to eat and drink, that I was English, and that I could speak a little French. He no sooner heard the latter statement than he set off down the ladders at a prodigious speed. I followed him, with a rapidity equal to his own, but more dangerous to me owing to my lack of experience in this particular form of gymnastics.

At the foot of the staircase he led me into the church. Evidently, heretic as I was, there was no desire to keep me out. I began to understand that I had been taken to the top of the tall tower for the sole purpose of seeing the view and inspecting the telescopes.

The singing in the church was magnificent. There were no boys or women in the choir, and there was no organ. But the full, rich tones of the men's voices were an organ in themselves, and, as they rose and fell in praise or supplication, something of their devotional fervour infected both priest and pilgrim alike, and none fell more completely under its spell than I did myself.

About ten minutes before the end of the service I left the building. My monk followed me and stopped me. I felt just a wee bit irritated. I did not like my movements being watched and controlled in this way. Then the old man smiled again. I thought perhaps he might be seeking a gratuity for showing me the telescopes, and I offered him money. He declined the offering somewhat impatiently, and made signs that he

wanted the phrase-book. I gave it to him and he found the word " Wait," so I waited.

When the service was over, and the throng was pressing out to the evening meal in the refectory, he stepped up to an important-looking monk in a tall steeple hat with a long veil hanging from the summit. For a few moments the two men held an animated conversation, from time to time directing their glances towards me. Then the new acquaintance that was to be, a fine scholarly gentleman, came up to me and in excellent French asked me what I was doing at Walamo. I told him I had come to see the island.

" Why ? " he asked.

I hesitated. " Out of curiosity," I stammered. I felt an awful beast, confessing to this obvious gentleman that I had intruded into a community like this out of curiosity. He did not seem to understand me, for he asked :—

" Are you in business ? "

" No."

" Not a commercial traveller ? "

" No."

" Then what are you ? "

" A schoolmaster."

In a minute he held out his hand and gave me a good, hearty greeting. The fact that one is a schoolmaster is not always and everywhere productive of so much cordiality. He held my hand, and with a grave, sweet smile playing over his face, he said :

" Now, what do you want to know ? "

" At what hour I can get something to eat ? " I replied, with promptitude.

"At ten in the morning and at eight in the evening. But would you like some tea now, with bread?"

" Yes," I replied, and the force and earnestness of my reply made him bubble over with laughter. " I have not eaten," said I, by way of explanation, " since early this morning."

He shook hands with me again, summoned my monk, who all this time had remained at a respectful distance, and gave him certain instructions. I was taken back to my cell and asked for some money. I produced a handful of small coins. My attendant took a few of them and went away. He was not long absent, and as he spread out his purchases on my little table he was as pleased with me and with himself as a child with a new toy. He had a small packet of tea and another of sugar, and nothing else. He sat down and read the phrase-book. He found, " I had a very bad night last night," to which I replied with, " Thank you so much for all your kindness."

By this time we had carried on this aimless conversation till I thought my head would split; in came a short-haired novice with a teapot, two glasses and a samovar. My monk made the tea and helped me to drink it. After my tenth glass I produced the biscuits. Up to this point I had been carefully treasuring them. I tendered my monk a few and he accepted all I offered. He left me for a moment to fetch some rye-bread, sour and plasticiny. He ate his with salt. I was unable

to swallow the first mouthful. But to make him think I had partaken of the bread, I sneaked a big piece into my pocket when he was not looking, with the intention of throwing it away at the first opportunity.

We parted at last, but not before the phrase-book had again been requisitioned. This time, much searching and cross-examining led to the information that he of the serious look, but gentle heart, was to be my "housemaid." He promised to see that I got tea at nine in the morning and again at half-past five in the evening, and that this should be brought to my cell. He left me, refreshed in body and mind. When all was silent, I went downstairs intending to take a walk in the cool. I met my housemaid in the hall. He promptly turned me back and sent me upstairs again. It was humiliating, but I had to obey. Besides, I was beginning to have enormous faith in this red-haired friend who had at last led me towards a teapot of my own.

I had not been back more than a few minutes when a knock at the door announced the arrival of yet another new face. The hour was eight, and the newcomer had brought my supper. I had not intended, originally, to eat by myself, but with the monks in their refectory. But as I could not explain what I wanted, I had to take my meals when and where I could get them. Perhaps it was just as well that I dined alone, for I could not eat the food, and to have passed the dishes, one by one, would have savoured of discourtesy.

A GUEST CELL AT WALAMO.

[*Facing page* 16

The food on the tray in front of me consisted of a big, thick, square slab of sour rye-bread, two bowls of vegetable soup, chiefly greasy water with bits of cabbage floating in them, one bowl of an indescribable mixture, and one flask of *kvas*—a variety of beverage that tasted like vinegar flavoured with aniseed. I was not in the best condition for food, even of the most appetizing variety. I had been very nearly sea-sick on the boat in the morning, nearly sick with hunger in the afternoon, and I had just swallowed, in rapid succession, ten glasses of tea. I tasted the soups and shuddered ; I attempted the mixture, but was immediately defeated. I pocketed the bread. When the novice appeared again to take away the tray, and saw how little I had eaten, he looked so disconsolate that I almost laughed. To judge by a comparison of our faces, his misery was more intense than mine. He addressed me in Russian, and I gathered that what he said was, " This won't do, young man. You'll have to buck up. You can't live till next Friday on music and scenery!"

But I was full of tea and biscuits. I was as happy as a well-fed boy after his Christmas dinner, so I smiled at the affectionate sorrow of the man in front of me, and replied in English, " It's all right. Don't you worry on my account. I am distended with tea from China and biscuits from Reading." He did not understand a word, and his woeful face, so expressive of his kindly interest in my welfare, was, in its way, the funniest thing I had seen for several days.

There was nothing to do when he had gone, so I went to bed. No candles or lamps were supplied. I locked the door, stole the blankets from the other three beds, threw open the windows, and tried to get to sleep ; but the beds were very hard —a one-inch straw mattress on a wooden plank.

At two o'clock in the morning I was awakened by a monk going the round of the corridors, ringing a plaintive little bell and calling out something in a loud monotone. Almost immediately afterwards the church bells began to toll, for this wanderer of the night was calling through the passages the hour of prayer and summoning the faithful to the first service of the day. I disregarded the summons, and sought once more for sleep.

I was awakened later on, at a more reasonable hour, by a vigorous knocking. I arose and gave admission to a layman, evidently some kind of official by the badge upon his cap. He knew about a score of words of English, having once been in Grimsby for a week. He was one of the two policemen kept on the island, for what purpose I cannot say, unless it be for restraining unruly pilgrims from committing unlawful acts. I managed to get a great deal of information out of this policeman, for he had a Finnish-English dictionary and I had an English-Finnish one. Our remarks were mostly monosyllabic, and very much to the point. There was no time for the elaboration of compliments, or for the construction and decoration of elaborate phrases. I now learned that it was

possible to purchase white bread, milk, and eggs. I sent the policeman off on a foraging expedition. I bought a dozen eggs and had them hard boiled so that I might eat them at such times as hunger should determine. Their odour, when opened, was stronger than my appetite, and I subsequently distributed most of them amongst the poorer pilgrims, who received tham gladly. There are no fowls at Walamo, and the eggs are purchased in large quantities at irregular intervals. On excellent tea and bread I made a hearty meal.

While I was making my breakfast my red-haired housemaid arrived. He was the bearer of a note, in French, from the monk who had been so useful to me on the previous evening. The note ran :

> Dear Sir,—
>
> I would like to pass with you, if you care for me to do so, an hour or two after dinner. Let me know by this honest fellow if you will be at home. Reply simply " yes " or " no," and if " yes " I will be with you at mid-day.

I replied in French, which I hesitate to publish, for I have taught French in my time, and I would not willingly advertise my unfittedness for the task. My answer was to the effect that I should be happy to see him at noon, though I both spoke and understood French very badly.

After breakfast I returned the policeman's call, and found him at home. His room fairly reeked with tobacco smoke, though, as a guardian of the

laws of the monastery, he should have known better. We conversed with dictionaries and phrase-books, and I got the history of the French-speaking monk. He was a Russian of distinguished family; had had a brilliant career at the University and in the army; had gone the pace and had had to clear out of the way. Subsequently, he told me his story himself, with a brevity that was more illuminating than a string of details. He said, " When one is young, and has plenty of money, it takes a lot of courage to keep straight. I hadn't the courage."

I went back to my cell about eleven, and swept the place clean. Every visitor has to perform such tasks as this for himself. Brooms, brushes, and other domestic paraphernalia are kept in the corridors. There must be more than one way of sweeping a room. I had never played the game before, and when I had finished, the place was full of dust, and everything looked a great deal dirtier than when I started.

Into this dust-laden atmosphere came the novice, bearing the official breakfast. I tried some salt fish and a kind of porridge, but merely looked at the two bowls of soup. The look more than satisfied. I knew that when the waiter came to remove the things he would be sorely disappointed at the little I had eaten, so I threw the fish, bit by bit, out of the window to the birds outside. They devoured it with avidity. If it had been possible, I would have thrown away all the soup as well, but people were continually

passing and repassing under the window, and soup splashes so when it falls. There was enough food on that tray to have lasted any ordinary man for two days. No one need fear hunger at Walamo if he can but eat simple food. By this time I was resigned to living for the rest of the week on bread and biscuits. I had now had twenty-four hours of comparative fasting, a hard bed, an unfurnished room, and no tobacco, and I never felt better in my life.

Promptly enough, at twelve o'clock, my friend came to see me. He was a gentleman, every inch of him, courteous and kind. He was accompanied by a fat, jolly priest, a man who was the very picture of good health and good temper. The latter had been in charge of the Russian church in Alaska, but had been invalided home on account of severe rheumatism. On his way home he had passed through New York, London, Paris, and Berlin. In each capital he had stayed a few days and had picked up a few words. In London he had been introduced to the Bishop, and described him as "a very lovely man." He would doubtless have said more had his vocabulary been more extensive, and all of it would have been true.

Despite the rain which was falling heavily, they made me put on my cap and overcoat and go with them for a tour of inspection of the monastic buildings. In these buildings there is everything that is necessary for the welfare of a community of men of simple habits. There are installations of machinery capable of doing everything that

the monks require. There are wood-carvers' shops, places for making candles, boots, and clothes; an architects' office; a printing establishment and a photographic department. There are studios where religious paintings and decorations are planned and executed; stables, laundry, dairy, saw-mills, corn-mills, and anything else that your fancy may suggest to you as ministering to the needs of man, but not to his desire for luxuries.

Every man, on his arrival at the monastery is set to do the work for which he is best fitted. The singer joins the choir, the carpenter the woodworking department, and the milkman goes to the dairy. If you know no handicraft you must learn one, and play your part in the life of the establishment. There is no payment and there are no drones.

On the medical side there is a neat little hospital, a dentist's room with all the usual awe-inspiring appliances, and an apothecary's store where drugs and medicines are dispensed. I was taken to see the cells occupied by the monks themselves. These are not usually shown to visitors, but the monks treated me like a little boy who had to be amused, and no one ever worked harder than they did. I entered into the spirit of the whole thing, felt and acted like a schoolboy—a well-behaved one—shook hands with befrocked foremen, inspected machines and tools, uttered astonished or admiring exclamations at appropriate moments, and was rewarded

by so much courtesy and attention that I don't believe I could ever be rude to a foreigner in my own country, not even if I tried.

My friend had to go to a service at one, so he left me in charge of the man from Alaska, who took me for a walk, in the course of which we visited the gardens, the smithy, the stables and the graveyard. In the latter are long rows of deacons, priests, and abbots. In his simple broken English my guide spoke of books and music, and his red face fairly beamed as he murmured almost reverently the names of his favourite composers. "You English," he said, "have no music. You are too fond of money." He had read Russian translations of Farrar's *Life of Christ* and *Life of St. Paul,* and was enthusiastic as to the language in which they were written.

It was nearly half-past two when we returned to the guest-house, and as he looked rather hot and weary I asked him if he would come to my room and have tea. Not being versed in the rules of the monastery I preferred my request with some diffidence, lest I should be suggesting something that might be forbidden. A full-moon smile, however, greeted my suggestion, and he asked: "You got tea?"

"Yes."

"And sugar?"

"Yes."

"And milk?"

"Yes—and I've got some eggs too."

"Then come on," he replied joyfully, and off

he bustled to lead the way. It was the little eggs that did it. I think even the most ancient egg must possess a deliciously light and dainty flavour for a palate that is daily bombarded by the salt fish and greasy soups that form the staple diet of the monks of Walamo. The high priest of Alaska made the tea, after which he drank five glasses without milk and then a glass of milk without tea. He put the lumps of sugar into his mouth and sucked the tea through them. He ate two or three slabs of rye-bread and three of the eggs. It did me good to see him enjoying himself.

When he wished me good-bye he said, " Come church, six. I sing." I needed no inducement to go and hear the singing. I had only a few days left, and I never expect to hear such voices again. But I had more visitors before church time. My friend and my monk both returned, for reports had been spread abroad that I did not eat enough, and my friend had come to see what could be done. I now learned that it was possible for pilgrims to purchase butter and potatoes. I gave my housemaid the money, and he went off gleefully along the long, long corridors, and down the many flights of steps simply to buy me food. I told him to let me have the potatoes boiled in their jackets, for supper. Potatoes and butter, with good milk as the accompanying beverage, and two sweet biscuits by way of dessert, make a meal that is not to be despised, especially at Walamo.

On the Wednesday morning, my friend said to me :

" Would you like to be introduced to the abbot ? "

" Certainly," I replied.

" But you must do as the pilgrims do. He will give you his hand to kiss, and he will bestow his blessing upon you. Do you mind ? "

" Not a bit," I said, " I will do what you wish with pleasure."

I have travelled too much to have any silly scruples whatever about observing forms and ceremonies deemed polite in the homes of my hosts.

When we arrived at the abbot's little house he was busy, and we were taken to a small room to await his arrival. When the old man entered the room I did not exactly bow. I knelt. He was over eighty years of age and very fragile. He was small, roughly clad, snowy-haired. His face was that of a saint. I needed no forms or ceremonies to compel me to touch the hand that he extended towards me. To touch him was a privilege. To look at him was an inspiration. I have never seen any man who so filled me with instant awe and wonder as the aged abbot of Walamo. He made the sign of the cross over me and gave me his benediction, and I rose a better man for it.

My friend stood beside me and, with his assistance as interpreter, I held some conversation with the ruler of the monastery. He asked me my name, where I came from, what I was doing at

Walamo, and how I was enjoying myself. Then he asked :

"Do you write for the papers ?"

Now was I verily in a hole, for I had really come to Walamo for that purpose, and yet to make copy out of this band of loving men seemed little short of sacrilege.

I replied, "I came here to see you and your island, and to write about your ways. But everybody here has been so kind to me that, if you object, I will not write a single word."

"Write what you please," he answered, "only speak truth." Then he added : "I will give you a souvenir of your visit."

He gave me an ikon and a short history of the monastery in Russian. These he tied up in a piece of tissue paper, making a neat little parcel such as one gets in a shop. The interview terminated with the same procedure as that with which it opened, and I left the abbot's modest little dwelling calmed and subdued by the force of a great personal charm.

After two days, when the folks around me had discovered that I was quite harmless and very grateful, they treated me as a little child. I was, in a way, petted by everybody. Each monk with whom I came in contact did all he could to make my stay pleasant. The cold looks gave way to friendly greetings, and my single regret was that I could not express my thanks in the Russian language, though I could mumble the one needful word in Finnish. The people were much concerned

A RUSSIAN MONK.

[*Facing page 26*

because I could not eat their food, and they shook their heads as though they thought some serious bodily infirmity would fall upon me. They failed to realize that under the influence of milk, butter, and potatoes, I was getting rounder and rounder every day.

When it was known that I was willing and anxious to get photographs I had plenty of sitters. Instead of forbidding me to use my camera they stimulated me to try it on landscapes and buildings, priests and pilgrims.

The day after my interview with the abbot, my friend said to me :

" Have you the ikon the abbot gave you ? "

" Yes."

" Do you wish to keep it ? "

" Certainly. Why do you ask ? "

" Because the abbot is a little bit concerned about his gift. To us such an object is something sacred. As you notice, we always cross ourselves when we pass one. The abbot thinks that perhaps you, who belong to another church, may treat the holy object with disrespect, and he has been wondering whether he ought to have given it to you."

" Please tell the abbot from me," I replied, " that if he really wishes me to return the ikon I will hand it back to you. But he can be quite certain I shall never treat it with disrespect. On the contrary, I shall treasure it as a memorial of one of the pleasantest weeks in my life."

As I never heard any more of the matter I suppose the abbot was satisfied.

During the course of the next day or two I got a great deal of information about the life in the monastery. The abbot had expressed the wish that I should write a truthful account of the institution, and, in order that what I had to say should be as accurate as possible, I got my friend to allow himself to be interviewed at some length.

The following is the arrangement for the day :

2 a.m. All rise.

2.30. Service in church.

3 to 4. The workmen, that is those who perform the manual work, rest.

4 to 5. Tea served. Each monk is allowed a quarter of a livre of tea and one livre of sugar per month.

5 to 10. Work.

10 to 10.30. Those who have been engaged in manual labour get their morning meal. From 9 to 10.30 there is service in church for all those not so engaged.

10.30 to 12. The workmen can sleep if they wish.

12. Work begins again.

3 to 4. Tea and black bread are served. White bread is only supplied on Sundays and holidays.

4 to 7. Work.

7.30. Supper.

After supper the monks attend church for half an hour for evening prayer.

At the end of July each monk receives one litre of oil for the lamp in his cell. This has to last him till the end of the next March, and it does not

allow of much reading in bed. During the other three months of the year no oil is required, as the days are very long in these northern latitudes. After evening prayer no lights are allowed in any room in the building, and candles, which might perhaps be obtained from visitors, would be immediately confiscated. It will be seen from the time-table given above, that the monks have few minutes for reading, studying, walking, or for amusements of any sort. All the hours are filled with duties of one kind or another, for the community is self-supporting.

Anyone is admitted to the monastery who cares to apply. Some are made into novices and afterwards into monks. Others remain as laymen, but subject to the same rules and regulations as the others. Promotion from the rank of novice to that of monk is made entirely by the abbot, and the period of the noviciate has been known to last as long as thirty years or even for life. For the novice, the rules are exceptionally strict, and it is only by the fullest obedience that the higher status, with its somewhat easier routine, is obtained.

The monastery provides everything that the inmates require, but if a man leaves he must hand back all the monastic property in his possession. At no time may he hold any money of his own. Despite the severity of the discipline, and the plainness of the fare, only rarely does anyone return to the world, and of those that do, the majority take up work connected with the church. Once in eight or ten years permission may be granted

to pay a visit to parents, especially if the latter be aged. Some monks never go away at all, and even if they do they are generally quite ready to come back to the quiet life of toil and worship. They even find that they have lost their taste for other foods and beverages, and long for their simple fare. There is nothing to prevent parents from visiting their sons. They may come just like any other pilgrims. At such times, a monk is permitted to walk about the island with his mother, but not with any other female relative.

There are thirty priests who are not monks, fifteen deacons who play an important part in the services of the Greek church, and two hundred and fifty monks. These, with the novices and the lay brothers, make up a total of from twelve to thirteen hundred.

There are several smaller monastic settlements on some of the smaller islands. Occasionally only one or two monks inhabit these lonely places of refuge, but at the present time no man lives absolutely alone. One hermit once lived at Walamo entirely by himself in a small wooden hut. He attended to all his own wants, and spent his life mainly in prayer and meditation. He died between eighty and ninety years of age, and was buried not far from his cell under a wooden tomb. The pilgrims are in the habit of chipping bits of wood off the tomb and using them as infallible cures for toothache. It is found necessary to put on a new wooden roof at intervals.

There are five superior monks, who form a

council for the election of the abbot, who is chosen from amongst the members of the monastery, and is not imposed on the brotherhood by any outside authority. The present abbot, old as he is, attends every service. He suffers from illness, and is very weak, but he never neglects the slightest duty, considering it incumbent upon him to set an example to all under his rule.

Tea can be taken by a monk in his own room, but all other food, with the exception of bread, must be eaten in common. This rule is relaxed in the case of the sick, but sickness is of rare occurrence amongst men whose fare is so simple and whose life is so strenuous. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays no fish or butter is served. On the other days of the week salt fish is obtainable, and half a glass of milk per day is allowed. No meat is eaten at any time, and the butter is more like grease than the substance to which we are accustomed. Practically all the food eaten on the island, with the exception of flour and salt fish, is produced by the labours of the monks themselves. The soil is so poor that it will not grow wheat at all, and rye only in insufficient quantities. Most of this soil has been brought from the mainland and spread over the rocks or the loose sand which, in places, forms a covering to the rocks. This fact alone speaks volumes for the industry and perseverance of the monks, and whatever diverse views may be held as to the general utility of a life such as we have been describing, here is distinctly one point

to the good. Bare rocks and sandy heaths have been converted into gardens of flowers, fruit and vegetables.

The bread used at the Holy Communion is specially baked in a separate bakehouse, and the men who are employed in its manufacture are specially noted for their cleanliness of person and holiness of character.

The wood used in the monastery is usually purchased, as only very old trees are felled upon the island. Wax, for the manufacture of the candles, has also to be bought, though the candles themselves are made at home. The money required for these and a few other necessaries is obtained partly by the sale of granite from the quarries and pine-tar made from the resin of the pine trees. The only other source of financial supply is found in the gifts of the pilgrims. These amount to not more than two or three thousand pounds a year. Each day that a steamer leaves the quay a basin is placed at the door of the guest-house, and the visitor gives according to his means or his generosity. The poorest of all pay nothing; the rich, sometimes, not much more. A fair donation is considered to be a mark—ten pence—a day.

There are sixty-two cows for the provision of milk and butter. The cows will never allow themselves to be milked by a woman, and this antipathy is even kept up in their descendants when sold to farmers on the mainland. It is said that they invariably flee at the sight of petticoats. When

any of the cows are killed their flesh is sold to passing steamers, but the hides are converted into leather and used in the manufacture of boots and shoes. There are seventy horses for use in the granite quarries and the forests, and there are four or five carriage horses. The latter are required to convey the monks from one part of the island to another and are the gift of wealthy Russians.

Walamo is independent of the outside world in the matter of lake navigation as in other things. It possesses one large steamer suitable for traffic over the waters of the stormy lake, and two small launches for trips among the islands. The stokers and the engineers are all long-haired monks, though the captain and the other officers are laymen. It is a more than curious sight to see a monk in his long robe oiling an engine or shovelling coal under a boiler.

On the island of Walamo itself there are five churches: the great church of the Transfiguration, the church of All Saints where the abbots are now buried, one church in honour of St. Peter and St. Paul, and two in honour of the Virgin Mary. The church of St. Peter and St. Paul is a room over a gateway leading to the monastic buildings, and the gateway is therefore distinguished as the Holy Gate. There is a sixth church, that of the Holy Trinity, on another island.

The rectangular group of buildings which forms the central part of the monastery is built on a terrace reached by a flight of steps. Just before

passing through the Holy Gate is a small shop, where mementoes of the visit, such as picture-postcards and guide-books are sold. Passing through the Holy Gate you arrive at the smaller courtyard. Opposite lies the hospital, and in the wing to the right are the so-called Imperial cells which were occupied by the Czars Alexander I and Alexander II during their visits in 1819 and 1858 respectively. On entering the inner and larger courtyard the enormous church of the Transfiguration, the chief church of the island, is seen. The other side of the quadrangle is occupied by the house of the apothecary, the refectory, and another church.

The first foundation on the island was made as early as the year 992, by two monks who have since been adopted as the patron saints of the monastery, and whose images are to be found on innumerable ikons. About five or six centuries ago a Swedish king, Magnus by name, came east on a mission of war and pillage. He planned an attack upon Walamo, but the monks raised a storm and shipwrecked the warrior. They had previously taken the precaution of burying the bodies of their patron saints, deep amongst the rocks, to preserve them from desecration in case the foe should effect a landing. When all danger was over, they brought the bodies and placed them in the church, where they remain to this day. There they rest, under an enormous shrine of solid silver, before which candles are always burning and devout men and women always praying.

King Magnus, who had designed so much evil to the men of peace, afterwards repented of his evil ways, entered the brotherhood, and died here in 1371. His grave is still pointed out to the visitor.

All too soon came the day of my departure. My steamer was timed to leave the quay at ten o'clock, but at that hour, when I went down to the harbour, neither steamer nor passenger was in sight. The place was completely deserted. It was evident that I was the solitary person who had any faith in the time-table. At half-past eleven I called at the quay again, and again I was the only expectant one. To cut a long story short, the steamer did not moor alongside the wharf till nearly half-past two in the afternoon. The captain greeted me cheerily and seemed surprised to see me looking so well and happy.

Crowds of my new friends came to wish me adieu, and I said my own farewells with a touch of real regret at the thought that I should probably never see any of these men again. I bore away memories of a healthful peace, of a body of unselfish and devoted men, and of a life so simple that what we call the simple life is luxury by comparison.

I hung over the side of the vessel till the last face had faded out of sight, when I lit my pipe and ordered a veal cutlet.

IN HOLLAND

AT VOLENDAM.

[*Facing page*

II

HOW TO SEE HOLLAND

THE best way of seeing any country is largely a matter of opinion, but, as a general principle, one may state that the best method is that which combines the maximum of comfort with the minimum of expense. Ideas of comfort and of expense differ; personal whims and fads must be taken into account. Hence the following remarks are offered only for the benefit of those who feel that they would be good companions for the writer if ever they were so unfortunate as to have to endure his company in the land of the dykes.

When you visit Holland, don't travel on foot—that is too slow. Don't travel by train—that is too fast. The genuine traveller is the man who wants to see the people of the land he is visiting, and he always travels third class. Now third class in Holland is unendurable on account of the predilection of the poorer Dutch for closed windows and stuffy atmospheres. Don't travel by bicycle; the flat roads are monotonous, and the view is often limited by canal embankments in one or more directions. There is little reason for warning anyone not to travel by aeroplane; we have not yet reached that stage of aerial navigation which

renders such a warning necessary. It only remains to add that, if you would see Holland properly, you must travel by boat.

Holland is a network of canals and rivers, and there are steamers carrying passengers in almost every direction. The steamers are clean and cheap. The water-ways are often at a higher level than the surrounding land, and the only things that limit the vision are the curvature of the earth and the strength of your eyesight. The speed is in fractions of miles per hour, but this enables a leisurely and adequate study to be made of the behaviour of crew and passengers at the ports of call. You can never understand how Holland has been won from the sea ; you will never realize the painstaking methodical measures of the Dutchman; you will never comprehend how a great commerce can be built up out of single chickens, solitary pigs, and individual potatoes unless you go by water.

It will happen sometimes, but rarely, that there is no canal boat available, or that the times of sailing do not suit your plans. In such cases, wherever possible, take the tram. Now to travel in this way heavy baggage must be discarded, for porters are not always discoverable, and a huge dress-basket will not be admitted on a tram. Take one box, cabin-trunk or other form of traveller's nightmare if you will, and a small hand-bag or rucksac that will hold a razor, the usual toilet appliances, sleeping suit, guide-book and map, and no more. See the box as seldom as possible, and never attempt to look after it yourself.

As an indication of what can be done in the matter of water-travelling in Holland, with only a limited amount of money and time at your disposal, the following route is suggested. A few fares are given as illustrations of the cost. For the things to be seen at the places *en route*, consult your guide-books, most of which are indifferent, with the very remarkable exception of *A Wanderer in Holland*, by E. V. Lucas.

Land at Flushing and send your box to Rotterdam to await your arrival there. Get a receipt for this luggage and be thankful you need not see your impedimenta again for several days. You have plenty of time to saunter up to the bookstall of the railway station to buy Van Santen's *Officielle Reisgids* (5d.). This contains railway, tram, and steamer time-tables, fares and other useful information. Get here or elsewhere, as soon as you can, Ten Brink's *Toeristen Atlas van Nederland* (1s. 3d.). Stroll out of the station to a little canal on the left and take the steamer to the town of Flushing (1d.). There is a frequent service. From Flushing you can go in quite a luxurious steamer to Middleburg, thence to Dordrecht, and finally to Rotterdam. The fare from Flushing to Rotterdam is 4s. 5d. First Class and 2s. 8d. Second Class. As a rule it is preferable to travel First Class on the steamers, as the Second Class deck is shared with cows, pigs, and other live stock. By travelling First Class you escape these little inconveniences, and you can inspect the Second Class passengers at your leisure. On

arriving at Rotterdam, hand the receipt for your luggage to the hotel porter and he will fetch it for you more cheaply than you can bring it yourself. On leaving, tell him to send the heavy thing to Amsterdam and to let you have the receipt before you set out with the indispensable and portable handbag.

From Rotterdam, one of the funniest little boats that ever called itself a passenger steamer, runs to Delft (8d.). Unless you speak Dutch and so can bargain for a lift on an ordinary canal boat you will be forced to take the tram-car to the Hague (visit Scheveningen on foot or by tram to see the hats and cloaks of the young ladies), and thence to Leiden.

From the Hague to Leiden the tram runs through back gardens, down village streets, and along the brink of baby canals and adult ditches. From Leiden an excursion by another canal boat can be made to Katwyk. From Leiden go by steamer to Amsterdam (1s. 2d.), a most convenient centre for all kinds of water excursions. You can visit Marken and Volendam on the same day and dine at your hotel again in the evening, though a longer stay should be made in Volendam if time permits.

Take a trip to Alkmaar (1s. 3d.) by boat, arriving there the evening before market-day, to see the famous cheese-market. If you cannot manage this, then do not go to Alkmaar. On this canal route there are so many windmills that one wonders how the country gets wind enough to turn them all.

Another day go along the North Sea Canal to Ijmuiden (1s.); thence by train—a very short run—to Haarlem; and thence back to Amsterdam by tram. Make your way by steamer via Utrecht to Rotterdam. Many variations and extensions of these routes can be found. All you need is Van Santen's Time Tables, Ten Brink's Atlas, a certain amount of common sense and foresight, and freedom from luggage.

III

A DUTCH CHEESE MARKET

It was a gloomy morning when I wandered into the market-place at Alkmaar. There were heavy clouds overhead, and rain was threatening. There was gloom also on the faces of the market people —but, then, that was nothing unusual, for the Dutch farmer is not conspicuous for any striking exhibition of mirth. I was saddened, too, for I had come to see and photograph the famous cheese market, and the absence of sunlight seemed likely to interfere with the successful prosecution of my intentions.

The cheeses were there, however, lying on the ground in all their glory, and defying the dullest weather to tone them down into a sombre hue. They were the very perfection of inanimate impertinence. As they lay in their long rectangular piles, two or three deep, they looked like so many gigantic flaming oranges—for it is the yellow and not the red variety that is sold at Alkmaar. In most places they were covered over with a sheet of tarpaulin—perhaps to keep off the rain ; certainly not the dust, for such a thing as dust would never have the audacity to settle on anything half so clean and shiny as these golden balls.

IN THE MARKET. HAARLEM.

SELLING ORANGES: AMSTERDAM.

[Facing page 44

There were a few people engaged in throwing some unpunctual cheeses out of blue-and-yellow carts, and there were other people who caught and passed them on to yet other stolid Teutons, who laid them with almost reverential tenderness upon the ground.

Most of the spectators seemed to care little or nothing at all whether anyone bought or sold. There was an air of the profoundest indifference. I believe I was the only excited person present, dodging about, trying to get a decent view of men and cheeses whenever the sun peeped out for a minute, and generally getting moved out of the way at the critical moment by a fat and inartistic policeman.

On one side of the market-place stands the picturesque Weigh House, with a clock that has a whole circus of little horses and trumpeters to call attention to the passing of the hours. A few minutes before ten, everyone began to look at the clock. Interest awakened. All the funny, corpulent people from the country were waiting for the performance of the little circus troup that lived in the tower. But no sooner had the first stroke of ten fallen upon the ears of the multitude than they individually and collectively poured into the square. Not one of them had the slightest wish to look at the clock, or to see the little horses. The attention of each and all was concentrated on the things that were for sale. The alleys between the shining yellow spheres were thronged with eager crowds. The giant, fragrant oranges

were slapped and pinched with vigour, tempered, however, with discretion. Some men dug tiny little scoops into them, and brought out long " fingers " of cheese. They would bite a little off the end, or perhaps only smell the sample, and then replace it.

Arguments between buyer and seller were frequent and excited. There was a great deal of heated discussion and much argument as to price. When a bargain was concluded the parties slapped each other's hands two or three times, with a determination and force that seemed somewhat unnecessary to the casual observer. But who knows ? Perhaps the method of concluding the bargain affects the quality of the article vended. The bargain over, indifference resumed its reign on the faces of those who had been done, and of those by whom the doing had been accomplished.

Once more, as half-past ten approached, all eyes turned to the clock. When the chimes began to ring, another army appeared on the scene. These were the bearers who carry the cheeses to the Weigh House to be weighed. They are all members of one of four guilds. Very often they wear an official uniform of white duck and hard, unvarnished straw hats of red, yellow, green, or blue. The colour indicates the guild to which the bearer belongs. The man with a red hat has a red tray on which to carry the cheeses, and red weights with which to weigh them. The long shallow trays that are used will hold dozens of the yellow cannon balls, and when loaded the total weight

IN THE HARBOUR, VOLENDAM.

PORTERS CARRYING CHEESES.

[*Facing page* 46

must be about 260 lb. The bearers shuffle along, careless of all bystanders, with the forceful persuasion of a steam-roller and the alacrity of a railway porter certain of a tip.

The rate at which the cheeses are weighed by the solemn officials who preside at the big balances, suggests a desire on their part to get the whole business over as speedily as possible. Or can it be that they are merely showing off to the tourists with the cameras, and the journalists with the note-books ?

Once the cheeses have been weighed, they are carried away to carts, waggons, and boats. Loading the boats is an occupation that it pleases the lazy to watch. A long trough is placed from the side of the canal to the side of the boat, and down this trough the cheeses are rolled as fast as they can be fed into it. Two men in each boat catch them and arrange them in two layers, until the whole floor is covered. Then planks are laid over those that have already been deposited, and two more layers are put down. And so it goes on until the boat is full. Where the cheeses go to when the loading is complete I do not know, for I could not speak Dutch, I dared not ask the policeman, and the little trumpeters in the Weigh House tower did not understand a word of English.

IN SIAM

IV

HOLIDAY-MAKING IN SIAM

PEOPLE who are accustomed to take their holidays in countries with efficient railway systems can scarcely imagine the amusement and the delight of travelling in a country whose only highways are water-ways, and whose few roads are mere jungle tracks. It was my good fortune, some twenty years ago, to spend an occasional holiday, travelling for pleasure, in the kingdom of Siam, away from the neighbourhood of the capital. There were then no railways, and the only way of making a holiday trip was by water. For the greater part of the country this, I believe, still holds good.

There are two ways of making the trip—one by means of a house-boat, and the other by means of a steamer. The house-boat is about twelve feet long and four feet beam, and is rowed by several men, varying in number from two to eight. The most usual number is four. These men stand to their work after the fashion of the gondoliers of Venice. They use long, heavy oars that are loosely fastened to a small wooden post fixed in the side of the boat. The last man not only rows with his hands, but he also keeps one of his feet

on the rudder for steering purposes. The men work well together with a long, steady sweep of the heavy oars, and they propel the boat forward with an even, rapid movement.

In the centre of the boat is a small hut or cabin, which is not more than three or four feet high, so that its occupant can only lie or sit therein. Standing is impossible, and considerable difficulty attends the taking of one's meals and the operations of washing and dressing. The deck planks are all removable, and under these are stowed all the clothes and provisions that the traveller may need. The cook, who is an indispensable part of every expedition, sleeps and cooks in a small space measuring about two feet each way at the back of the boat. His utensils are few. A tin pot, a tin pan, and an earthenware stove, with a supply of charcoal, constitute the whole of his apparatus. During the heat of the day he fastens a big Japanese umbrella over his head, and then, squatting on his haunches, prepares for his master a meal of four or five courses as easily as if he were in a kitchen at home, surrounded by all those numerous appliances whose mysterious uses are only to be appreciated and explained by the *chef* himself. When the meal is ready, it is handed in through a small window at the back of the cabin. It is eaten in a half-reclining posture on the floor, as there is not an inch of space, either vertical or horizontal, for tables and chairs.

The traveller's limbs soon begin to ache from constantly lying on the hard mattress that covers

the floor. Very seldom can he land, as the jungle comes down to the water's edge, and amongst the roots of the tangled undergrowth there lurk innumerable poisonous snakes. He cannot get out and swim, for the waters are infested with alligators and electric eels. His only chance of getting any exercise is when his boatmen moor the tiny craft at one of the " salas " or rest-houses, which are scattered all over the country. These are merely raised platforms, with a pole at each corner supporting a roof of coloured tiles. They are erected for the benefit of travellers, and as an act of " merit-making " by devout members of the Buddhist faith, who thereby expect to purchase some indefinite benefit in a future existence.

These house-boat journeys are only made inland, as the boats are quite unfitted for travelling by sea. The rivers are connected, and the land threaded in all directions by canals that vary in size from a broad water-way crowded with traffic to a tiny, winding stream, where the tree-tops meet overhead, the squirrels frolic in the branches, the gaudy kingfishers dart from bank to bank, and the chattering monkeys add their deafening noise to the shrill cries of the brilliant green parrots. In the canals near the sea the tide rises and falls, and at low water the boat lies stranded in a muddy valley, whose slimy, foul-smelling banks form the home of the ugly alligator and the still more repulsive-looking mud-fish.

Should it rain, the roof of the cabin invariably

leaks, and then mattress and clothes are soaked with water, and the unfortunate holiday-seeker tries in vain to dodge the little streams that descend upon his head and trickle down his back.

There are many pretty places on the shores of the Gulf of Siam. These can only be visited by steamer. They are charmingly picturesque, the bathing is excellent, and the fish are delicious, so that they form very desirable resting-places for those seeking a quiet holiday after a year's hard work in the capital. With the exception of one or two there are no steamers running to them; there are no hotels, and no food can be obtained except rice and fish. At the time when I was living in the country there was only one village that possessed any house that could pretend to be suitable for a European. In this village there was a little stone house, erected many years before, which belonged to a Siamese nobleman, who willingly gave permission to any European who might desire it, to spend a few weeks in this seaside residence. I was one of the few who ever asked for leave to use this house for a month. On thinking the matter over, I found that we should have to take sufficient clothes to last the whole month, as any laundry work was impossible; sufficient food for the same period, as none was there obtainable; the whole necessary furniture, such as tables, chairs, bed, and cupboards, as the house was empty. As there was no fresh water fit to drink we had to take our own. A few friends joined me for the proposed holiday, and we agreed

to charter a small steamer from a native merchant to convey us to our destination. He promised faithfully that the steamer should be at the landing station near the house of one of the party by one o'clock of a given day.

On the morning of the appointed day we carted everything to the river-side, and a motley collection did our belongings appear. There were baskets of live chickens, baskets of live ducks, hams in canvas, jars of rainwater, boxes of soda-water, pots, pans, stoves, chairs, tables, mattresses, books, cameras, and a heap of miscellaneous oddments lying loosely scattered about, with a number of native servants keeping guard over them. At one o'clock no steamer had arrived but nobody was surprised at that, as we did not expect any Oriental appointment to be promptly kept. But when two o'clock passed, and then three, and then four, we thought something must be the matter, and so sent one of our party to make enquiries. He returned after dark to say that the shaft of the propeller was broken, and that the steamer was in dock, but would be ready for us at seven the next morning. We hauled all the boxes, baskets, pans, and oddments back into the house, prised open one promising-looking case, made a dinner of cold potted beef and soda-water, and slept anyhow on the floor of the dining-room.

At seven the next morning all the paraphernalia was out on the landing again, surrounded by amiable natives, who smiled compassionately

upon us through the whole of another long hot day. Eventually the steamer did put in an appearance, and, with the sun setting to hide his laughing face, we embarked on the one-cabined vessel. The single cabin was filthily dirty and swarming with cockroaches. We slept on deck. In the middle of the night the rain came, so we wrapped ourselves up in mackintoshes and crawled under the tables we were taking with us.

During our journey next day we held conversation with the skipper, a comical old Malay with no nose.

"Why are we going so slowly?" I asked.

"We go half-speed," he replied. "This boiler, he got many holes. Go full-speed—burst!" and he chuckled to himself as he witnessed our evident discomfiture.

About two miles from our destination the recently-mended propeller shaft broke once more, and the propeller sank beyond all hope of recovery. We landed all our cargo by means of a small boat that the steamer possessed, and were considerably relieved when we saw it spread out upon the sands undiminished in quantity.

We found the stone house. No one had been there for several years. The doors and windows were all gone, the roof was in holes, weeds were growing in the cracks in the walls, and the place was swarming with ants, spiders, and lizards. We put on our oldest clothes, got out two tins of kerosene oil, and flooded the floors with the malodorous liquid. We diligently brushed and

scrubbed the walls and floors with oil, until we felt pretty sure that all the insects that had not been destroyed by the oil itself had at least retreated before its powerful odour. Saturated with kerosene, we ran down to the shore and plunged into the warm tropical waters, where the refreshing bath not only washed away all the grease and dirt from our bodies, but also removed from our minds all memories of our recent uncomfortable experiences, leaving in their stead only a humorous appreciation of our ludicrous efforts at establishing a seaside camp.

The natives came and poked their inquisitive noses into our boxes when we were out, and established an acquaintance with the cook through the medium of trifling gifts of fish and coco-nuts. They used to watch us bathe, marvelling at our white skins. They tried to learn to eat jam and drink soda-water, and signally failed. Never did anyone molest us or interfere with our personal liberty. On the other hand, everyone, from the head-man of the village down to the lowest slave, exhibited in a most striking manner that charming politeness so characteristic of all classes of the Siamese.

The native girls were rather shy at first, and ran away from their looms and hid themselves when we visited their homes; but after a time they learned that we were not ogres, and they used to come and sit upon the floor, listening very intently to the marvellous accounts we gave them of our native land.

Only once did anybody try to swindle us. A Chinese fisherman brought us an animal and offered it to us for sale. Head, feet, and skin had been removed. He said that it was a hare that he had trapped in the jungle. None of us knew much about anatomy, but we were inclined to be a wee bit dubious as to the exact ancestry of the alleged hare. Then one of us quite casually suggested that it might be a dog. A broad grin spread over the face of the fisherman, for the stray shot had hit the mark. He retired laughing, saying in his native tongue, " Master very clever, very clever," and dragging the carcass of the wretched pariah after him.

Most of the people objected to being photographed, as they considered that a bit of life went with every copy of the face, and if the copy were in any way lost or destroyed then the fragment of life that accompanied it would also be lost or destroyed.

They were very interested in the work of the artist member of the group. They had all had a peep at the ground-glass screen at the back of the camera, and had expressed their astonishment at the coloured picture they had seen there. Now, when they saw the artist at his easel, they thought he was working by some improved photographic process, so that when the brush touched the canvas the distant landscape came up through the back. All went well until he altered the position of several boats, in order to produce an effective composition. They soon discovered there was

something apparently wrong with the apparatus, and when they finally obtained the solution to the mystery, and found that the boats on the left of the landscape had been moved to the right, to suit the artist's pleasure, they went away rather disgusted with the faulty character of the mechanism.

If you wish to take a short journey you employ a buffalo cart, which is made entirely of wood, and is drawn by a couple of buffaloes. These beasts are patient enough with the natives, but have an unexplained dislike to white men. The motion of the cart is something like that of a rolling boat, only much more jerky, and the ultimate result, on persons of weak internal construction—well, that can pass.

V

STAGE-MANAGED

It was about twenty years ago that it happened. I was rather young at the time, a fact that must be emphasized in order to understand how it was possible for the incidents that are here recorded to occur. I had been in the capital of Siam for about six months. Being young, I was guilty of a fault that, alas, does not always pass with youth, that of pronouncing judgments on insufficient evidence. After observing the Siamese for the short space of six months, I was tempted to suppose that I had fathomed all their ways and customs, and understood them inside and out. On the whole I was inclined to vote them a charming and unsophisticated race.

I studied the language, which I pronounced with all that absence of foreign accent and idiom that distinguishes the linguistic attempts of the average Englishman. I had ambitions to be an ethnologist. I had had no training, but I was fond of inquiring into the origins and meanings of native customs and superstitions, and I had an idea that if I persevered I might, in time, become a person of repute.

So when I got my first holiday I determined to

spend it in a trip into the interior. I hired a house-boat, got four men to row it, put the cook on four square feet of open deck at the back of the low-roofed little hut that filled the centre, put the "boy" and the dog in the little space in front, packed my clothes and provisions under the loose planks of the deck, crawled into the house in the centre, and set off on my journey. I had been unable to persuade any of my friends to accompany me, as they preferred the club whisky to the canal water, and were not interested in ethnological problems. I was, therefore, forced to go alone, but I felt no sensation of loneliness. I even tried to encourage myself, by observing that I should be all the better able to make my observations on the habits of the people away in the country villages who were, as then, untouched by the hand of so-called civilization, and to obtain necessary data for my projected treatise on *The Simplicity of the Oriental Peasant.*

I waved a last adieu to a few friends on the landing-stage at the river-side, cast a last look at the glittering gilded spires on the roof of the audience hall of the Royal Palace, and then entered the wide canal or *khlong*, called Khlong Bang Luang. I passed on slowly between long lines of floating houses and teak rafts, between streams of busy canoes, gondolas and steam-launches, and enjoyed, as all people do who travel in Siam, the brilliant sunlight, the heavy green foliage of the palms, the bright colours of the native dresses, and the happy look of contentment

that lives and laughs in every sun-tanned face. The boat sped on, propelled by the powerful exertions of the four strong boatmen, standing, gondolier fashion to their work, and borne swiftly on the flowing tide, until at last we got clear of the city, out amongst the rice-fields and the plains. Here and there a Buddhist temple raised aloft its triple-coloured roof amongst the branches, where the green parrots set up a deafening torrent of abuse at my advent. Then came a long, straight stretch of water, with the low attap palm fringing the banks. I viewed everything with the deepest interest and delight, and was quite surprised, on looking at my watch, to see how fast the hours flew by.

Just as the big, round sun was setting, preparatory to leaving the world in darkness, without much intervening warning of twilight, my men pulled up at the further end of the canal, and I looked out on the broad waters of the River Tachin. My cook handed me my dinner through the square hole at the back of the cabin ; the men fastened up the boat for the night and set to work to cook their own meal of rice and fish.

I finished my dinner, lit a cigar, and began to wonder how I should spend the evening. It was only half-past six, but it was quite dark. I have always made it a rule to sit up as long as I can find anyone to sit up with me, and sometimes after that, so that going to bed at half-past six was totally out of the question. I dared not have a light on the river on account of the mosquitoes,

who were already sampling me without the assistance of any illumination, and buzzing their appreciation of the change in their ordinary menu. I could not sit still; I puffed till I was nearly choked, but apparently without effect upon the enemy. It was quite as bad on shore, for every few seconds I could hear a smart slap on the bare flesh, telling of repeated efforts on the part of the servants to destroy one of their wily vicious foes.

Bang! A long train of light shot rapidly up into the sky, burst into a dozen blue and crimson stars that died rapidly away and left the darkness more dark than before. It meant fireworks. I watched the display for some time, until my attention was diverted into another channel by a sudden burst of inharmonious sounds. I could hear the scraping of the one-stringed fiddles, the beating of the bamboo dulcimers, the banging ot the bronze gongs, and the clanging of the brass cymbals. Evidently there was merriment afoot. A native band and fireworks meant a festival of some sort, though whether of a joyous or sorrowful nature it was not possible to decide without further inquiry, seeing that both burials and weddings are attended with similar demonstrations.

I sent one of my men to find out the cause of the fun and to ascertain whether I might be allowed to witness the performance. He returned in a short time, and said:

"There is a cremation going on in the village. The wife of the head-man was burned this afternoon."

The band and the fireworks were in honour of the dead, and the band was playing at one of the strolling theatres that are usually employed on these occasions. The dead are first embalmed, and when the period of mourning is over, perhaps after a period of two or three years, the actual cremation ceremony is performed with a great deal of public rejoicing.

My servant brought with him also an invitation for me to attend the theatre and see the play. "I told the head-man," said he, "that you were on a mission into the country on behalf of the Minister of the Interior, so he thinks you are a very important person, and he will feel greatly honoured if you will go to his house. If you do go, please don't tell him that I have not spoken the truth, or he may make things unpleasant for all of us."

"Don't you bother yourself about that," I replied. "I will preserve the character of ambassador, deputy or delegate, or whatever else the local gentleman likes to think me."

I mounted the rickety wooden ladder to which my boat was moored, and scrambled up to the frail bamboo platform that did duty as a landing stage. Some of my men went ahead, and I followed them slowly as they showed the path by means of the faint light of one of the hurricane lanterns belonging to the expedition. The lantern was not of much use, for the light was almost eclipsed by the myriads of winged insects that fluttered around it and singed their wings against

the hot glass windows. Our road lay along a narrow muddy track between some low thick bushes, and emerged at the farther end into a broad piece of unoccupied ground that served the villagers as a convenient arena for the local cock-fights.

We were met by a number of children wearing torches. They escorted us to the home of the head-man, who was the host of all those who chose to present themselves on such an important occasion. He it was who had provided the theatre and the fireworks for the amusement of the neighbours and in honour of the dead. I was delighted with the reception that I met with at the hands of this simple people. Everyone seemed pleased to see me and anxious to show me the way about. I mentally composed a dozen paragraphs for my projected essay on the unaffected courtesy and charm of the unadulterated Oriental free from all the influences of County Councils and Education Authorities. My vanity was highly gratified by the attention shown to me, and I expressed that gratitude in the usual stupid English fashion by scattering a handful of small coins amongst the naked children who formed the chief part of my escort.

At the chief's house I was met by the widower. He wasn't really a widower, only about the tenth part of one, for he still had nine-tenths of his wife left to him if you take a broad view of the situation. This man had been to Bangkok in his time, and had there seen Europeans shake hands.

Shaking hands, when you meet a stranger, constitutes the finest method of breaking the ice that society has yet invented. As a rule a Siamese does not shake hands, and when you meet one you stare at him, he laughs at you, and politely waits for you to make the first remark. The chances are ten to one you have no remark ready to offer, so you return his laugh, he returns your stare, and you feel that you are presenting to the spectators a picture of lunacy of an unfamiliar type, that is, unfamiliar to the Siamese. Well, my host on this occasion gave me a warm grasp of welcome, and the handshake put me completely at my ease. I began to babble as usual and to pose as an inquirer. I asked all sorts of questions and got all sorts of answers, sometimes truthful, when the man to whom I was talking considered truth a matter of indifference; sometimes untruthful, when any exhibition of veracity would have been inadvisable. When politeness and truth were in the balance, politeness invariably won. The head-man was an adept at compliments, but I was scarcely prepared for the question:

"Are you English?"

"Certainly."

"I thought you were Siamese. You speak our language so well."

Even in the jungle, this sop to the vanity of the traveller was offered with all the charm and sincerity that marks the same gift elsewhere. The compliment to my linguistic abilities was very

gratifying to me, because I was young enough to believe it. I know now that I spoke the language atrociously. All Europeans do, especially those whose business it is to speak it best, the Government and Consular officials.

The head-man led the way to the back of the house, where the inhabitants of his own and the surrounding villages were gathered together to witness the performance provided for their amusement. As we drew near the scene of merriment, I noticed, on the outskirts of the crowd, a bamboo enclosure. The fence was an open frame-work about five feet high. There were several people inside moving busily about.

" What are they doing in there ? " I inquired.

" That's where the actresses are dressing. Come and have a look."

Up to the fence I went and unblushingly looked over. But the young ladies took not the slightest notice. I might have been merely another pole in the fence. They went on with their make-up, sticking long gold finger-nails on the tips of their fingers, powdering their faces till they were ghastly white, and donning their robes and tapering crowns with the most charming indifference. I did not long remain a silent spectator. I made what I then considered playful, and what I now recognize as extremely foolish remarks, inquired after the healths of the ladies, and have a dim recollection of having fallen violently in love with the leading lady.

But my host dragged me away and led me into

the theatre itself. There was a kind of raised platform supported on poles about three feet above the ground. The audience was sitting on mats placed on the bare earth, and all the men were smoking. As soon as I entered every eye was turned towards me and everybody began to giggle. The performers alone continued their former occupation without interruption, though I noticed an amused smile on the faces of one or two of them. It was a novel experience, and I was, not unnaturally, delighted. I could not help reflecting that these natives were the most unaffected and courteous people I had ever seen. There was something so delightfully simple and unassuming in everything they did, and it was all so infused with a kindly spirit of welcome that I could scarcely feel grateful enough to them.

They made way for me to pass through their midst, and I went to the front of the audience, where I prepared to sit down on the floor like the rest. But with a courtly gesture my host motioned me to ascend the stage, saying :

"You must not sit on the floor amongst the people of the village."

I mounted by means of a little ladder, and stood in front of the audience. There was a great deal of good-natured laughter and some cheering. I removed my hat and made my most dignified bow. The house was convulsed, and I wondered what I had done to arouse so much mirth. A slave brought me a chair and placed it near the throne upon which the queen in the play was to

sit. I took my seat and examined my surroundings with much curiosity. Presently two servants crawled across the stage bringing me tea and cigarettes. Another placed a small table by my side. I did not dare to drink the tea, because I was quite certain it had been made with dirty water and might give me a dose of cholera, but I smoked the cigarettes. They were made of Virginia tobacco rolled in the leaf of the lotus.

The actresses—there are no male performers in a Siamese theatre except the clowns—performed in dumb show while a chorus of women chanted the story of the action to the noisy accompaniment of the band. I sat quietly puffing away, noting all the details of the queer performance, and, with my usual vanity, turning it all into imaginary papers to be read before imaginary Royal Societies.

A troop of monkeys marched across the stage. They were only little children dressed in blue—a most unmonkeylike colour. They went hobbling about on their hands and knees, and this tickled me so much that, forgetting where I was and what character I was supposed to be supporting, I determined to join the throng and be a monkey too. I went down on my hands and knees, and wobbled about till I got uncomfortably warm, when I went back to my seat, vigorously mopping myself with my handkerchief. The delight of the audience was boundless. The women shrieked and the men laughed till they rolled about on the floor. I took this as tribute to the

success of my debut in the monkey role, and was unduly elated.

Just then the queen entered, and took her seat upon the throne. She was very close to me, and, getting more foolish and more bold with every minute of my first appearance, I turned and smiled openly at her. She pretended to be shocked, and put up her hands with a theatrical gesture as if to ward off my impertinent glances. The old women tittered; the young ones were amused or scornful; the men were indifferent. I ventured on a little conversation with Her Majesty, and in the intervals, when she was not twisting her limbs into all sorts of quaint postures, she condescended to reply to some of my remarks. After a while the novelty of the situation wore off. I began to feel tired and bored. As I left the platform I said in my best Siamese:

"Thank you so much for asking me here to-night. I have enjoyed the performance very much. On my way back to Bangkok I hope to call here and see you again."

Then I made another profound bow, and got down the ladder. I was greeted with applause, and many folks followed me to my boat. I was not long seeking the shelter of my mosquito net, and as I fell asleep I dreamed of being an honoured guest in the courts of Oriental monarchs, who gave me of their best without stint, and besought me to become their son-in-law.

I woke in the morning in the best of tempers, and did not even bully the boatmen when they

took an unusually long time over breakfast. It was while they were busily employed in making a hearty meal, one good enough to last them till the sunset hour, that a young man came to me and said :

"Those boatmen are a bad lot."

"Why ?"

"They made a fool of you last night."

"How ?"

"They took you into the village and showed you off on a stage."

"Yes, and jolly good fun I thought it, too."

"So did the people."

"What do you mean ?"

"Why, you were part of the show."

"Don't be an ass. The head-man of the village asked me as his guest."

"You are mistaken, sir ; you never saw the head-man at all. The man who took you round was the manager of the theatre. All the actresses and the audience were in the joke. They don't get a white man on the stage every day. But it was your own boatmen who planned the trick."

IN CORSICA

VI

WHERE NAPOLEON WAS BORN

As every schoolboy knows, Napoleon was born in Ajaccio, the capital of Corsica. And even if you have forgotten the fact, you have not long set foot in the island before you are reminded of it. Everything speaks to you of Napoleon. His shadow haunts the place. Streets have been named after him, chapels have been built to his memory, the local museum is crowded with souvenirs of himself and his family, his statues adorn the public squares, and the dull-looking house that was the nest of this imperial eagle is a place of frequent pilgrimage.

The chief feature of Ajaccio, as one sees it on arriving by steamer from Marseilles, is the gaiety of its aspect. The houses are painted pale blue, pink, or light green, and in the early morning, when the face of the gulf is without a ripple, this multi-coloured town is reflected as in a Swiss lake. It is set in a framework of high mountains that raise aloft the massive altar of their snow-clad peaks. All the beauty that Corsica possesses she owes to Nature and not to man.

The streets are lined with palms, orange and lemon trees, which give the place quite an

Oriental appearance. And the male inhabitants of the land do their level best, by their masterly inactivity, to preserve the illusion. One of the brothers in the famous tale by Dumas was a barrister; the other was a Corsican, a profession that does not seem to make any strenuous demands upon either the mental or the physical powers of those who practise it. The Corsican belongs to that race of dwellers in the south, who, all round the shores of the Mediterranean, understand and practise the art of intelligent idleness. They sit in peaceful and silent reflection. Their minds are untroubled by the care of this world's goods, for they have nothing to lose, and what they need in the way of food, clothing, and rent their hard-working womenfolk procure for them.

The central point of interest for all tourists is Napoleon, his birthplace and his grotto. Like all good tourists I went to see the great Emperor's earliest home. I forbore to photograph it, for it is plain and not over-beautiful, and it is only the memory of its famous occupant that makes it at all interesting. A photo would tend to destroy, and not to create that interest, which fancy, of itself, will always weave around the cradle of one whose career was fraught with such mighty consequence to the whole of Europe. It is the same with the cathedral and the museum; they are not worth a photographic record. But their story is full of romance, some of which is worth retelling.

Napoleon's mother, the most beautiful woman in the island, was hearing Mass in the cathedral

on the 15th of August, 1769, when she was seized with violent pain. She had scarcely reached home when a child was born, on a very little pallet bed, hardly higher than a couch. The new baby had a big head and an intelligent face, and screamed with a vigour that might almost have been regarded as prophetic. This was Napoleon, who, as a boy, was noted for his ugliness. His two most prominent features were a large head and a feeble body. When they took him, at the age of two, to the cathedral for the baptismal service, he resisted the sprinkling of the holy water, shouting, "No! No!" and striking everyone within reach, the priest included.

The only person the boy feared was his mother. She realized how passionate he was, and sent him to a girls' school, hoping that female influence would calm his impetuous temper. He seems to have been quite happy amongst the girls, till he chose for a sweetheart a sweet-tempered child of his own age. This aroused the jealousy of the older girls, who made fun of the juvenile sentimental couple. Napoleon, furious at the treatment meted out to himself and his beloved, seized a stick and drove his persecutors from the place. This led to his subsequent expulsion and a thrashing from his devoted mother.

I like the little stories that are told of how his mother drubbed him from time to time. There is something ludicrous in the idea of the conqueror of Europe getting the rod from a woman in one of the little rooms of this dull house at Ajaccio.

Another day he made fun of his grandmother, who was in the habit of leaning on a stick as she walked, and said that she was like a witch. His mother happened to hear the remark and looked sternly at the child, who contrived to keep out of her way until towards evening; then, when she seized him to administer punishment, the boy escaped from her grasp. The following morning he greeted his mother, and prepared to embrace her as usual; but she had not forgotten the punishment that was due, and pushed him from her. Later on in the day she told him that he was invited to dine with one of their relations in the town, and he went up to his room to get ready. Madame Letitia followed him, found him changing his clothes, and fastened the door behind her, after which, the young gentleman had to submit to a flogging which was none the less severe because he had managed to evade it for a whole day.

No sooner do you get within easy reach of the Place Letitia than you are surrounded by children screaming "La Maison Napoléon!" I chose a little girl foı a guide. This is my invariable rule. Girls are so much more intelligent than boys, and they do not make such discourteous remarks about your dress and ycur personal appearance if the amount of your parting gratuity is not quite as large as was expected. A score or two of children, friends and acquaintances of the guide, followed us, forming a very noisy and demonstrative escort. They demanded, with a patience

and persistence that were in themselves almost worthy of reward, " *Un sou, monsieur; un sou.*" Our chosen leader, worthy descendant of a fighting race, turned at intervals, and dealt vigorous punches at the nearest members of the attacking forces. The blows were without any effect, nor was the cheerful demeanour of the crowd in any way changed by my steady refusal to comply with the demand for sous.

We were conducted over the house by an elderly woman of benevolent countenance.

" Are you French ? " I asked.

Drawing herself up to her full height, and looking as vicious as such a nice old lady possibly could, she jerked out abruptly, " No ! Corsican."

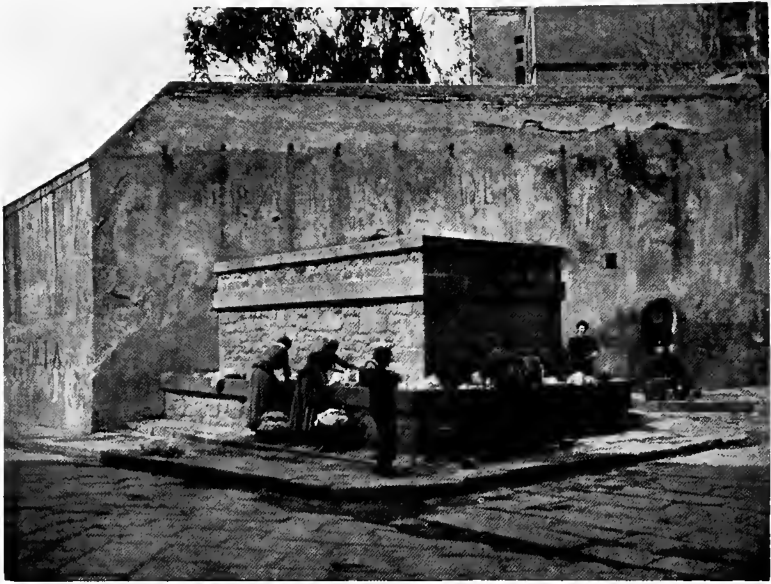
" So much the better," I added, and she was mollified.

The house, one of the best in Ajaccio, is well-built, in three storeys, each containing six windows. All the rooms have more or less handsome marble mantelpieces. Over the door is inscribed, " Napoleon was born in this house, August 15th, 1769." The old lady showed us the rooms on the first floor only. There is a small parlour with a few articles of furniture, which are supposed to have belonged to the family. Then we passed into the little room where the hero was born, and so on through the dining-room, with its floor of glazed tiles, and the drawing-room, with a floor of inlaid wood. I very much wished to ask the custodian which was the room in which Napoleon was spanked by his mother, but refrained. There

is a danger in joking with a Corsican, especially when a national custom or hero is concerned.

Just beyond a tiny stream, on the outskirts of Ajaccio, lies the Villa Milelli, a comfortable little house in a garden where pomegranates, myrtles, and roses flourish. This was the summer residence of the Napoleons, and here it is said the young soldier spent his furloughs with his family, pursuing his favourite mathematical studies under a big oak tree. Thither I bent my steps. I found the house in a lovely, lonely spot, guarded by two ferocious-looking, ferocious-barking, mild-mannered dogs, and an unkempt Italian, equally ferocious in appearance, and equally mild in manner. What French he knew was of an Italian variety; mine was of the English type. Nevertheless, we understood each other well enough. I had come to see the house; he was there to show it. He led us into a deserted kitchen, and, waving his hand in a circular sweep, he exclaimed, "Napoleon!" It was not quite certain to what his remark or his motion alluded. There was certainly not a thing in the room that could have belonged to the little corporal. He must have been invoking the spirit of the deceased.

He led us up a rickety ladder to an upper storey. We entered a room, absolutely devoid of furniture, with decayed walls and worm-eaten rafters. The guide bowed to the fire-place, the ceiling, the floor, each of the walls in turn, and at every bow, he exclaimed, "Napoleon!" He threw open one of the windows, and, pointing to



THE TOWN WELL, AJACCIO.

A CORSICAN DILIGENCE.

[*Facing page* 80

the broad bay beyond, to the long line of white-capped, purple heights, to the pine groves, and the palms, in the most impressive of tones, he finally remarked, "Napoleon!"

After that he uttered not another word, but closed the windows, showed us down the ladder, pocketed the customary gratuity, pointed with his hand to the path through the wood, and bowed a farewell, with a politeness and a grace that I would fain learn to emulate.

VII

CORTE, THE OLD FEUDAL CAPITAL OF CORSICA

UPON the sun-kissed island of Corsica there has been bestowed the not unmerited title of "The Isle of Unrest." The name is descriptive at once of the eminently stormy history of the past, and also of the character of the population of the present—a population whose long-practised habits of brigandage and private warfare have formed the theme of more than one of those whose business is the telling of romance. And it is but the merest truism to state that the idle, revengeful, cruel character of the people of to-day, is the direct outcome of centuries of bloodshed and pillage.

The earliest inhabitants of Corsica of whom we have any information came from Asia Minor. In due time they were followed by emigrants from Phœnicia and Carthage; Rome conquered the island in the days of her greatness, and planted a flourishing colony on the eastern coast. When the Vandals of the north played their part in the destruction of the Roman Empire, they took possession of Corsica, and held it till they, in turn, were dispossessed by the Greeks. When the

Saracens of the south moved on to conquest in Southern Europe they found a convenient halting place in this oft-invaded island, and there they remained till Charlemagne drove them forth. Now, all this happened before the year A.D. 1000, so that the earliest centuries of Corsican history are a veritable period of unrest.

Somewhere about the year 1000, however, a number of feudal lords leagued themselves together, gained control of the government, and set up a feudal capital at Corté, the centre of the island, and in the very heart of the mountains. What the place must have been like in that day we have little means of knowing, for here, as elsewhere throughout the land, there is neither architecture nor art, no relic whatsoever, existing to tell of the ancient past. It is lonely enough still, and you may wander for days amongst the great granite hills without meeting a soul. The circle of gorges, the ravines, and the mountains present to us, however, the same features that they presented to the feudal lords, and account for the choice of the position of the feudal capital, and for the part which this town has played in the military history of Corsica. It has always been the last refuge of the independence of the country, the last bulwark of Corsican nationality. It is not merely the geographical centre ; it is in more senses than one the heart of the island, a proud and heroic patriotic town. Through centuries its men have been valiant and, above all others in the island, faithful to the traditions of a people that

honours only the warriors who have led them again and again in their ceaseless struggle for national and political independence; a people whose only literature is the wild songs of war, and the vendetta chants that call eternally for vengeance.

The women have been not less true and valiant than the men. To-day they are noted for their beauty, and at the same time are regarded as the worthy descendants of those who, under the domination of the Genoese, made a vow never to marry whilst the country was under a foreign yoke, in order that they might not give birth to slaves.

Corté is now connected by rail with Ajaccio, the birthplace of Napoleon, and the modern capital. There are perhaps few visitors to the island who do not, at some time during their stay, forsake the orange groves and the palms upon the coast to visit the barren hills where the feudal capital stood. Preferring the road to the rail, I made the journey by bicycle, walking the greater part of the way, and free-wheeling the rest, ascending and descending with almost painful monotony, the steep granite waves which rise and fall from one end of the island to the other.

At the foot of the rock on which the modern town stands you dismount from the bicycle, to find the church and the houses high above you on the crest of a great billow of rock. Corté cannot be said to stand on the hill-side. It floats; it does not stand. Towering above all, on a slightly

higher crest, is the citadel, an erection of the fifteenth century, a place often besieged, often taken and lost. Here and there are dotted the tall campanile so familiar in many of the towns of Southern Europe. As seen in the distance, the appearance of the citadel-crowned breaker, with the smaller undulations of white and grey houses, is eminently picturesque. On closer acquaintance the prevailing impression is dirt; and, in a general way, it may be said that the more attractive a Corsican town may appear in the distance the less comfortable it proves when you wish to take up your abode therein. The system of drainage and sanitation, if there be one, is woefully defective, and the smells are sufficiently powerful to drive away all but the most enthusiastic lovers of the quaint and the unusual. There is more than a suggestion of truth in the American's remark that they could almost be phonographed.

The houses are everywhere built in flats, and to many of the freehold flats there is a separate proprietor. One of these barrack-like structures, containing nearly 800 people, has almost as many landlords as tenants, not one of whom will ever contribute a farthing for the repair of the common roof or staircase, or for the provision of an effective system of water supply. Each flat is provided with a sewer pipe, with the open ends of the pipes conveniently placed under the windows. When the inhabitants are in a hurry they throw all the domestic refuse into the street and courtyard,

and there leave it to be slowly disinfected by the patient influences of the sun and the rain. It had not rained for many days when I set foot in Corté, and the memory of the all-pervading odour of rottenness and decay remains with me to this day.

We ascended on foot the steep and narrow streets, assailed from time to time by crowds of stone-throwing children, who threw quite good-naturedly, and seemed quite indifferent whether their aim was true or defective. Stone-throwing is an art in Corsica, and the shepherd will direct his sheep, or the muleteer his mule by the aid of a well-directed pebble. As soon as this petrified welcome had exhausted itself, we became great friends with the little ones. In fact, the friendship was so strong that it became an inconvenience; for the moment a camera was erected all the youngsters crowded in front of it, and insisted on forming a part of the picture. They had no intention whatever of allowing us to leave their town without some permanent reminder of their vigorous introduction. To escape the crowd we went into the church. While we were pretending to be gazing solemnly at the altar, they trooped in by the dozen, and played at leap-frog over the chairs, the breezes wafting meanwhile into the sacred edifice odours that killed the incense and almost exterminated the worshippers.

Finding that it was impossible to escape the crowd, we went outside again and got to business. Our first object of attack was the Maison Gaffori,

in front of which stands a statue of Gaffori, one of the many Corsican heroes who boldly resisted the Genoese during the 400 years that their hand lay cruelly and heavily upon the ever-enduring, but never-cowed, race that inhabits the land. On the sides of the pedestal there is a series of bas-reliefs, one of which perpetuates the memory of Gaffori's gallant wife.

In the year 1750 this house was besieged by the Genoese. Gaffori was absent, and the defence of the place rested entirely upon his wife and servants. When the servants began to talk of surrender, their mistress went into a lower room, got a barrel of powder, and threatened to blow herself and all the rest of them to pieces if they discontinued the firing. Stimulated by her noble example, they continued their resistance, and held the Genoese in check until the return of her husband. In passing, it may be noticed that this house was inhabited in 1768 by Charles Bonaparte, the father of Napoleon I, and that here was born Joseph Bonaparte, afterwards King of Spain.

We escaped the crowd at last, and tried to find our way to the citadel. We wandered through devious streets and lanes, and arrived as often as not at the end of a blind alley blocked with manure heaps and piles of disgusting refuse. Finally, guided by two or three little girls, we clambered to the summit of a rock, from which the citadel could be seen. We were on a precipice, unguarded by wall or railing, and on the edge of which the children skipped about, as carelessly

and safely as their own mountain goats. When we remonstrated with them for not taking us to the fort itself, they explained, with a laugh, that visitors were not permitted inside the walls, and that they had led us to the one point where the best view was to be obtained.

We turned our faces away from the children and their perilous amusements in order to view the great citadel, crowning a rock that rises up 400 feet sheer above the river that foams at its base. There were men inside; but we could not see them. Doubtless there were guns too, but they likewise were invisible.

Not such was the scene in 1746, when Gaffori made up his mind to recapture the fort from the Genoese, who were then in possession of the stronghold. There was noise enough then, as the general directed a steady and vigorous attack upon the walls. So skilful and persistent was the attack that the Genoese commander began to have grave doubts as to his ability to hold the place. It so happened that amongst the prisoners within the fort was Gaffori's youngest son. The Genoese leader ordered the boy to be brought out and bound to the outside of the walls, thinking that this would put a stop to the firing. For a moment his plans were successful. The Corsicans gazed in terror, first at the boy and then at their leader. The guns were silent. But the short period of peace passed like the smoke of the cannonade as the wind blew it from the valley and left the rock clear against the sky. Gaffori, resolution and fear

contending painfully within him, shrieked the command "Fire." Out burst the artillery with redoubled vigour, the fort was captured, and Gaffori was rewarded, not only with the possession of the ancient stronghold, but with the yet dearer treasure of his living son. Gaffori died, as so many of his countrymen have done, by the hand of an assassin, and the assassin was a man of this very town. But the inhabitants of Corté marked their horror of the deed by razing to the ground the house of the murderer, and the spot where the house stood is bare to this day.

As we sat at dinner that evening in the moth-eaten, grimy hotel that boasts the name of Paoli, and were discussing the unrestful history of the people, in came the local idiot. He marched into the room, took off his dirty cap, bawled out untunefully the Marseillaise, and vended the local paper. He was quite indifferent as to whether the papers were taken or not, as long as the price of the copies was paid. When he had collected all the coins that the visitors were likely to surrender, he bowed, not ungracefully, and retired. And so the day that had been spent amidst the memories of the inspiring tragedies of the past closed with a ludicrous, mirth-provoking evidence of one of the tragedies of the present.

VIII

THE VALLEY OF THE TAVIGNANO

THE Tavignano is a small river that rises near the centre of the island and runs out to the sea on the east coast. At the one end of the valley stands Corté. At the sea end is Aleria, a mere hamlet at the present day; when the Romans held the island it had a population of 20,000. Now nothing is to be seen except a handful of dirty houses, an old fort, and a few formless heaps of stone that represent for us the former residences of governors and other important officials. Aleria must be reached by driving or cycling. The accommodation is not of such a type as to compel one to prolong one's stay. The inn is of the most primitive type; but the beds are clean, and that is something for which to be thankful. The inn consists of a part of the ground floor of a large building containing many flats, as is the Corsican custom. There is one room where they sell wine and tobacco, straw hats and pickles, biscuits and lamp-oil. There is a kitchen, a small dining-room, one bedroom for all the family, and another for all the guests; but, by telegraphing beforehand, you can reserve this room for yourself and party, and if extra sleeping accommodation is required it can be got

in one of the other houses of the hamlet. The apartments looked a little unusual at first; but the bed-linen is clean, and the Corsican is scrupulously honest, so that there is nothing of which to be afraid. It is well to provide a few dainties for breakfast, as the only morning fare provided by the inn is sour bread without butter, and black coffee without milk or sugar.

The traveller may well wonder whether, with these inconveniences, it is worth while to travel so far out of the beaten track. One visit will dispel all his doubts. The attractions of the little valley are of several kinds: scenic, domestic, and historic. The account of the scenery may be got out of the way first, for all descriptions of the beauties of nature are largely a waste of time. No words and no pictures can give just the things that, after all, constitute the charm of the outer world—the passing of the clouds, the singing of the birds, the ever-changing face of the running waters, and the whispering of the leaves as the winds play in and out of the verdant nooks and corners. Still, there is one feature of the scenery that is worth more than a passing mention. In this valley can be seen an excellent example of that wonderful covering of shrubs, known as the *maquis*. The *maquis* consists of six different kinds of flowering shrubs, and when they are all in bloom at the same time the island is resplendent in its loveliness. It reaches down to the bottom of the lowest valleys, climbs to the summits of the highest hills, rolls over and round the rocks and stones, clings to the sides of

precipice and gorge, and, when the sun beats down upon it, exhales a powerful but not unpleasant odour that, once experienced, is never to be forgotten. Napoleon is reported to have said, "Put me blindfold on the shores of my native island and I should recognize it by the odour of the *maquis*." This covering of bush is the hiding-place of those who are wanted by the officers of the law, for, despite the efforts of the French government, the practice of taking private vengeance, known as the vendetta, is still largely existent. The traveller need, however, have no fear, unless, perchance, his great-great-grandfather, at some remote epoch, should have offended, say, the thirty-third cousin of some peasant in the valley through which he is passing.

At Aleria itself, the first thing that will strike the visitor is the baking ovens. In Corsican villages, bread is never baked in the houses, but in stone ovens, placed by the roadside. Into these ovens blazing branches of cistus are placed, and after twenty minutes the stones are red hot. The ashes are swept out with the branch of a tree, and then the loaves are placed inside. In about two hours the bread is done. When fresh, the loaves are pretty hard and tough ; when stale, a hammer and chisel are preferable to teeth.

Within a short walk of the inn is the Lake of Diana, a large lagoon, one of the many to be found on this eastern coast. In the middle of the lake there is a small island made entirely of oyster shells. It is 460 yards in circumference, and dates

from the days when the people of Aleria used to send large supplies of salted oysters to Rome. It is covered with grass and trees, and is not immediately recognized as an old refuse heap.

To the north of the hamlet is the Genoese fort, picturesque but useless. With this fort is associated the name of Theodore, one of the most interesting of the many adventurers who have played small parts in the history of the world. Theodore was the son of a German baron, and, during his youth, wandered about over a great part of Europe. Once, when in Leghorn, he met a band of Corsican exiles who were endeavouring to effect the independence of their country. Theodore held many conversations with them, as the result of which they promised to make him King of Corsica if he would undertake to drive away their enemies. He accepted their offer, and in due time landed here with arms and ammunition furnished by the Bey of Tunis, on the understanding that Tunis should have exclusive rights of trade with Corsica and a safe refuge for her pirate ships in the harbours of the island. A general meeting of important nobles was called, and Theodore was elected king. He coined money, made laws, and put a few people to death. In time his money, and with it his popularity, diminished, and he left the island to obtain further supplies for his depleted exchequer. He wandered through Italy and France, and eventually reached Amsterdam, where he was thrown into prison for debt. Some Jews discharged all his liabilities for

him, and gave him sums of money with which to prosecute his plans for the recovery of his kingdom.

But when he returned he discovered that the Genoese had called the French to their assistance, and he was twice repulsed. Finding it hopeless, in the face of such strong opposition, to get back his crown, he came to London, where he once more suffered imprisonment for debt. He regained his liberty by assigning his kingdom to his creditors. He was taken in a sedan chair to the house of the Portuguese Minister, who, unfortunately, was from home. As Theodore had no money with which to pay the chair men, he told them to carry him to the house of a tailor in Soho. Here he was received, and here, in a few days, he died. An oilman named John Wright saved this King of Corsica from a pauper's funeral by burying him, at his own expense, in St. Anne's Church, Soho, where he rests to this day. A tablet on the wall is still to be seen by the passer-by; upon it is a half-kindly, half-satirical notice of the fate of the adventurer, written by Horace Walpole.

The journey from Aleria can be continued by rail, south to Ghisonaccia, in the midst of wild and imposing scenery, or north to Bastia, where natural beauties are fewer, but creature comforts reasonably abundant.

IX

ROUND ABOUT BONIFACIO

In southern Corsica there are a number of places little visited by the tourist, who concentrates his attention chiefly on points that can be reached by rail. Two of these places, Porto Vecchio and Bonifacio, are of considerable interest on account of their historical and other associations, though neither of them possesses any architectural beauty nor any association with the work of poet, artist, or philosopher.

To reach Bonifacio, several ways are open to the traveller. There is the dirty, uncomfortable little steamer; there is the motor, but you must take your own; there are carriages at very reasonable rates, which arrange for the two or three days' driving that are necessary for a visit to this end of the island; you can walk, but do not; and you can cycle, for the roads are really excellent. The cyclist is the only free man in this district of lumbering ox-waggons, uncertain diligencies, and no trains. He can get from Porto Vecchio to Bonifacio in less than half a day, and back from Bonifacio to the capital in one or two days. The road in many places lies quite close to the coast, and climbs ceaselessly up and down

a series of short, steep ranges, which bear about the same relation to the main chain of the island as the small bones of a fish do to its backbone. There is considerable variety in the scenery—sometimes the hills are clothed with the odour-laden, flower-bespangled shrubs of the *maquis*; sometimes dark pine groves cling to the sides of the peaks that sit majestically silent and beautiful, crowned in the earlier part of the year with snow; while at other times there are fever-haunted swamps, dark lagoons, great masses of pink or white rock. Variety is the key-note of the harmonies that nature has played upon this sunny land.

Porto Vecchio is a place of little importance. Its streets wear a somewhat deserted air, and the few people on view seem to have abundant leisure in which to regard and criticize the clothes and the doings of the casual visitor. In part the town is a network of tangled streets, decaying ruins, and tumbling houses. The bastions of the old fort rise on massive blocks of rose-red porphyry, and speak, in no uncertain voice, of the grandeur that belongs to the past. The Genoese, who for several centuries laid their cruel hands upon this beautiful island, have left behind them only memories of tyranny, bloodshed and pillage. Their ruined forts and watch-towers are the sole remaining relics of a rule that has not often been surpassed for its severity or for the brave and noble deeds that were done in opposition to its ferocity. To-day the inhabitants of Porto Vecchio fear no

foreign foe. Their deadliest enemy is at their doors. It is strange to reflect, as one stands on the hills above the lovely bay and looks at the bluest of waters, swelling into foam-crested wavelets as the wind plays over the sea, or watches the great breakers dashing themselves to pieces upon the rocks, or yet again rippling caressingly over the tawny sands, that during certain seasons of the year this is one of the most unhealthy spots in Europe. For the marshy plains are the home of malarial fever of the most deadly type, and death is often the penalty for sleeping in the damp, poisonous air. About the middle of June, poultry, children, and domestic articles are packed into the mule-carts, and away go the inhabitants, 3,000 feet nearer the sky, in full pelt from the dreaded scourge. Houses are left shuttered and locked; the vineyards remain untended; the fields lie fallow; and, during July and August, and often part of September, the streets are silent and the deserted town is left to take care of itself. The French Government is everywhere busily planting groves of eucalyptus, and striving, with an energy that must ultimately be crowned with success, to render life upon the plains possible during the hotter months of the year. In the spring, which is the time for the traveller to visit Corsica, the eastern plain is free from fever, studded with flowers, and one of the loveliest, and withal one of the quietest, spots in Europe.

As we cycled along the lovely road from Porto Vecchio to Bonifacio, a sturdy peasant, mounted

on a mule, challenged us to a race. I declined the honour; but my friend accepted, and won, much to the chagrin of the muleteer. But the cyclist's joy was speedily destroyed when his tyre fell a victim to a malicious chip of granite. Rain and punctures delayed us so much that it was late in the evening before we reached the most southerly town in the island. It was pitch dark, and in the empty streets of the lower town not a soul was visible. Above us towered a great mass, part wall, part rock, forbidding and grim as the stormy night itself. Higher and higher zigzagged the road, making the rate of our ascent a very slow one. At last we arrived at the entrance to the fortified town. The narrow gateway had an uninviting appearance. In the archway hung one small oil lamp, whose dim yellow light merely served to intensify the surrounding gloom. After some searching and more misgiving a hotel was found, situated on the first floor of a mass of tenements arranged in a series of flats. No hall porter greeted our arrival. Shouldering the bicycles we went up the broken, dirty staircase, and on reaching the landing placed them unceremoniously just outside the kitchen door. A cook went by, but he took no notice of us. The proprietor hurried to and fro, but asked no questions. Who we were or what we wanted seemed to concern no one but ourselves. A visit to the kitchen itself provided us with a certain amount of useful information, chiefly to the effect that dinner was in progress and that we might eat if

WASHING THE FAMILY LINEN.

A GENOESE FORT · CORSICA.

Facing page 98

we wished; that there were no rooms to let in the hotel; and that, perhaps, some kindly disposed person in the ancient, evil-smelling town might find us a bed. We ate and drank as only those can whose hunger is nature's due reward for much toil in the open air, and, when the guests had departed, we questioned our host as to the possible whereabouts of the beds in which we were to sleep. He led us through a maze of streets and passages, each more full of powerful odours than the last, up a narrow flight of stairs to a deserted flat. Pointing to the single bed in one of the rooms he indicated it as the resting-place of my friend. I had to take up my quarters elsewhere. We wished each other a sad farewell, and then I tramped off after the guide down the stairs, through more passages, up more stairs, and finally I found myself also housed in a deserted flat. As was the case in the first flat, the bed was damp and the room was stuffy. The candle gave but a miserable light, and outside the rain pelted and the wind howled as if protesting against the invasion of this ancient city by a couple of foreign tramps.

Carefully and quietly I bolted every door and window before I lay down, wrapped in my waterproof, on the outside of the bed. I need have had no fear. Later, in the course of my Corsican wanderings, I learned that the people of Bonifacio are singularly peaceful and honest. They belong to a race apart, and regard the rest of the Corsicans as strangers. They speak a different dialect; they do not practise the vendetta; and,

strangest of all, they do not make their women work in the fields, except during the time of the olive harvest, when all must play their part in the most important labour of the year. Theft is unknown, as it is in almost all parts of Corsica, for though in this, one of the most beautiful of islands, life is held more cheaply than in any other part of Europe, yet it is one of the proudest boasts of the natives, "We have no thieves." Was it not De Quincey who said that if a man once committed a murder there was no knowing to what depths of infamy he might descend, even to robbery, drunkenness, incivility, and finally procrastination? His doctrines are not exactly those of the vendetta lovers of the picturesque "Isle of Unrest." With the morning came the light—and breakfast. It was not a sumptuous meal—merely sour bread without butter, and black coffee without sugar or milk, as at Aleria. A town that has given its name to a strait might have given a more tempting repast to those who came to behold it.

There are relics of Boniface in his tower, and memories of crusading knights in a church with an octagonal embrasured tower. One house bears a tablet recording that it was once occupied by Charles V, while another house is pointed out as the one inhabited by Napoleon when, as a young lieutenant of artillery, he spent eight months on duty in this town. Bonifacio is built in two parts, one on a high chalk cliff that rises almost perpendicularly from the sea, and the other, lower down,

round the sides of a small natural harbour. The connexion between the two parts of the town is made by means of a well-constructed road, which zigzags in easy gradients up the side of the rock; but short cuts can be made by means of broad connecting flights of dilapidated steps. The high town consists of tall, dingy houses, containing numerous flats, and narrow, steep, dirty streets. Flights of steps are almost as common as streets, and mules are seen almost as often as men. Both man and beast trip up and down the broken stairways with an alacrity and security born of long practice.

The chief church of Bonifacio contains a portion of the true Cross. It is kept in a cupboard in the wall of the sacristy, and is guarded by an iron door. This door possesses two keys, one of which is kept by the curé, while the other is entrusted to the mayor. Both keys are required to open the door. On Good Friday, and on certain other specified days, the priceless relic is carried in solemn procession through the picturesque maze of winding roads and alleys. Moreover, when the great gales blow, and when the blue Mediterranean has ceased its smiling and is thundering right at the gates of the city, the relic is carried by the curé to the terrace that overlooks the sea. There, attended by the anxious crowd, he blesses the waves, and in due time his interposition takes effect, and the blue sea of the south once more laps placidly the base of the fretted rock.

X

WHERE NELSON LOST HIS EYE

WHEN I was a small boy, like many other small boys, it was duly impressed upon me, in the pages of my history book, that Nelson lost a bone at one place, an arm at another, an eye at another, and so on. I used to shiver, as the story progressed, at the idea that, perhaps, a single bone might ultimately be found roaming about the seas, performing the duties and representing the person of one of the bravest of the brave. When I was spending a holiday in Corsica, and, looking up and down the map for possible excursions, I lighted on a place called Calvi. Surely, thought I, that is the place where Nelson lost his eye. The name of the place suggested rather more to me now than it did in former days. In my knickerbocker epoch, Greenwich or Birmingham would have sounded just as well, and have satisfied my not very violent cravings for historical accuracy. But now I was actually within a few hours' ride of the place, and I determined to see it.

I am at Calvi. I write this under the very walls of the fort at whose siege Nelson lost his eye. A few hours ago, as the tiny train steamed into the station of the little Corsican port, and as I looked at the still, blue waters of the harbour, and the

grim, grey flanks of the snow-capped mountains on the other side, I thought of that eventful day in 1794 when the English pitched 4,000 bombs into the town and reduced it to a heap of ruins. It was on that day that our most famous admiral met with the lamentable accident that gives the title to this sketch of Calvi.

I know practically nothing of history, at least, in detail, and I was quite unaware of the exact position of the spot where the accident in question occurred. I was filled with zeal for the discovery of the place myself. I felt as though I were a kind of embryonic Freeman engaged in researches upon historical topography. So after I had lunched and duly braced myself with sausage and wine, *du pays*, I strolled down to that part of the shore where the bathing vans are. There was a young man in a sort of Tam o' Shanter hat that looked very Scotch, talking to a bonny nursemaid who was unmistakably French. Neither of them appeared to be at all likely to be interested in Nelson or his losses. All the attention they could give was being given to one another. The baby demanded a certain amount, but the demand was unheeded. I sat down on the jetty to think. My eye wandered to the spot where a part of the little fort comes down to meet the water. My meditations were interrupted by a small boy in scarlet knickerbockers and a blue jersey. I turned to him eagerly. He was young enough to be at school. He would probably know something about the question that was agitating my mind.

"Have you heard of Nelson?"

"No, monsieur. Where does he live?"

"Well, I can't say exactly. He came to Calvi more than a hundred years ago."

"Then he must be dead."

"Yes; he is dead."

"*Donnez-moi un sou.*"

If the presentation of one or several sous would have led to any information about our hero, I would have given gladly; but, under the circumstances, I felt that the money would be misapplied.

I wasn't getting on very fast, and I sighed. I looked across the bay. The waters in the foreground were bathed in sunshine, but the snow-capped summits of the mountains beyond were wreathed in heavy rain-clouds, and the valleys that lay between them were filled with a deep purple mist that threatened rain. A few rowing-boats rocked idly on the broad expanse of blue. A sailing vessel, with sails half-hoisted, suggested nothing but peace and quietness. There were nowhere visible any memories or intimations of war, and, try as hard as you will, and as long as you please, you can't get information out of a boat or a mountain. Everything was picturesque, dreamy, and silent.

I passed along the almost deserted quay. Old men and young were taking refuge from the sun in shady nooks and corners. Straggling up from the sea to the rocks above were tiny, crooked little streets, with curious balconies, outside staircases, and odours powerful enough to reduce any

person with the slightest sense of smell to a condition of immediate submission. It would certainly have been far more appropriate had Nelson lost his nose, or at least his olfactory nerve, in this odoriferous place.

The quay is closed at the far end by the walls of the fort. A bank of prickly pear covers the mound that leads from the sea to the walls of the citadel. This looked like a place where a landing might conceivably have taken place. I would photograph it. I set up the camera, and was immediately surrounded by a crowd of children. They got in front of the camera and loudly demanded that I should take their photographs. I pretended to satisfy the demand, did not snap the shutter, packed up my apparatus, and moved on, followed by the crowd. One by one they left me, till at last only one solitary urchin remained. He had on a blue coat and trousers. On his head was a flat blue cap. Round his neck he wore a pink-and-white striped handkerchief. His feet were bare ; but it was so long since they had been guilty of any acquaintance with soap that the accumulations of thirteen years evidently served instead of boots.

"Have you ever heard of Nelson ?"

"No. Who was he ?"

"An English sailor."

"Is he on the Nice boat ?"

"No."

"Is he on the Marseilles boat ?"

"No."

"Then he doesn't come to Calvi. *Donnez-moi un sou.*"

I refused the gentle request, and the blue-apparelled youth climbed to the top of a high rock, where he was well out of reach, and began to hurl stones at me. He was a fairly good shot. I turned round and tried to awe him with my eye. The experiment was a dismal failure. When the next piece of granite fell at my feet I changed my plans, and walked away as slowly as I dared and as haughtily as I could. Speed soon gained on dignity, and I quitted the scene of my own personal bombardment with commendable rapidity.

It was becoming evident to me that in the Basse Ville, where the sailors and the shop-keepers live, there was little chance of obtaining anything but demands for sous. But there, far above me, were the walls of the citadel, dark and frowning, high and strong. I made my way up a pebbly incline, and presently found myself at the entrance to the fort. Over the chief portal were inscribed the words:

CIVITATIS CALVI SEMPER FIDELE

an allusion to the brilliant defence of the town in 1553, when the inhabitants gave a signal exhibition of their fidelity to their Genoese over-lords. There were no sentries or officials to oppose my entry within the walls, no warning notices forbidding the admission of strangers. The roughly-paved road ascended rapidly, sometimes by means of steps winding round and round, and ever

getting nearer the summit of the rock on which the fort is built. Narrow tortuous streets dodged hither and thither, houses played hide and seek with one another in all sorts of insanitary places, on every bit of available land within the ramparts. Houses, hospitals, churches, barracks, canteens were piled about and on top of one another, as though somebody had accidentally upset the whole lot out of a sack. There seemed to be no plan and no method about the erection of this jumble of civil, military, and ecclesiastical architecture.

I noticed two very intelligent looking little girls in the road. I raised my hat, and bowing to the elder of the two said :

" Good afternoon, mademoiselle."

" Good afternoon, monsieur. Will you please take my photograph ? "

" With pleasure. But first of all, I want to ask you a question. Do you go to school ? "

" Certainly."

" Are you going there now ? "

" *Ma foi.* No. It is Sunday. Can't monsieur see we have our best clothes on ? "

" And very pretty clothes they are, too."

She blushed with pleasure.

" How many children are there in your school?"

" Forty-six."

" And are they all clever ? "

" Certainly."

" And do you learn history ? "

" Truly."

" Then, who was Nelson ? "

"Who ?"

"Nelson !"

"Who was he ?"

And then we went through it all again, but the young lady had no knowledge of either Nelson or his misfortune. I was getting very despondent, when a boy who was standing near said, "But I know about Christopher Columbus."

"What do you know about him ?"

"He was born here. I am one of his descendants. Shall I show you the house where he was born?"

The living representative of the great adventurer was not clean. He had not been washed since a date approximately that of his birth. I don't believe he ever will wash himself. Washing is not a Corsican virtue. I had never heard at school that Columbus was born at Calvi. I had a hazy kind of idea that he might be a Spaniard, or an Italian, or even a Portuguese, but the fact that he was a Corsican was surprising news to me.

"Shall I show you his house ?"

"No, thanks. Besides, I don't believe Columbus was born here."

"He was," said one of my little friends, eagerly. "I'll show you where."

She seized one of my hands and led me hurriedly over masses of rotting vegetables, heaps of foul refuse, and other disagreeable débris.

"*Voila !*" she exclaimed breathlessly. We were in front of a ruined house. Over what had once been a doorway, was a white marble slab, on which were the following words : "Here was

born, in 1441, Christopher Columbus, immortalized by the discovery of the New World, at a time when Calvi was under the domination of the Genoese. He died at Valladolid on the 20th May, 1500."

The condition of the house was not exactly creditable to the people of Calvi, and the words on the memorial slab are more or less illegible. Perhaps, some day, a rich American will come this way and clear away the refuse that clings about the few remains of this historic cradle. But then, perhaps, the story isn't true. And yet that little girl believed it, and she looked so full of innocence and truth that I believed it too.

She took from her apron pocket a rather dirty piece of paper, and unfolding it carefully she inquired, "Monsieur would like a picture post-card, maybe ?"

As a matter of fact, monsieur had fallen in love with the bright-eyed, dark-haired little maiden, and he bought all she had.

" Where do you live ? " I asked.

" Near to the canteen. Mother keeps a *buvette.* Would you like to see my mother ? "

" Is she as nice as you are ? "

" Nicer."

" Then I'll come."

I was welcomed heartily in the *buvette.* I ordered the least harmful beverage I could find, and after the chair and the table had been dusted, and the glass wiped, with the same soiled and ancient duster, I said to the mother :

" Have you ever heard of Nelson ? "

" What did he do ? "

" He came to Calvi."

" What did he do here ? "

I was about to remark, " He blew your fort to pieces," but the temper of the Corsican is short, and the point of the stiletto is sharp, so I merely answered, " He lost his eye."

Was it my bad pronunciation that misled her, or was she laughing at me, when she solemnly replied, " Well, monsieur, I haven't seen it."

I didn't suppose she had. If anyone in Calvi possessed it they would put it in a bottle and charge one franc per person to see the same, while they would vend post cards of the organ at every corner of their time-worn alleys. I gave it up. It was evident that I was not born with the faculty for historical research.

I went down to the beach. The sun was setting. Its last red rays were firing the snows on the summit of Monte Grosso, and printing purple ribbons on the deep. There was an English lady seeking shells among the sand, where once a famous English sailor sought for glory and for fame. And to the people of Calvi, where some of his earliest laurels were won, and some of his earliest pains were suffered, the shells and the glory were about of equal value.

XI

BASTIA

Corsica has given to the world at least three great men—Napoleon, soldier and Emperor; Paoli, patriot and administrator; Columbus, sailor and discoverer. And if the reader object that Columbus was not a Corsican, then my only reply is that no one knows for certain where this intrepid navigator was born, that Corsica claims him as one of her sons, as related in the preceding chapter, and as I, for the time being, am—in imagination, at any rate—in the brave little island, I am strongly affected by local tradition, and would fain believe that the discoverer of the New World hailed from the Isle of Unrest. Who knows ?

He may even have been a fugitive from some infuriated family who wanted his life, according to the playful rules of the game of vendetta, and his sole idea of sailing away to India by a western path may have been but a mediæval dodge to escape the pursuer.

However this may be—and there is not the slightest shred of either evidence or tradition in support of my ignoble suggestion—you may, if you make Bastia your head-quarters, visit the ruins of the house where Corsican patriots say that Columbus was born.

Between Bastia and Calvi there is a railway. The train travels with less speed than one of our own expresses, and stops at tiny wayside stations, not so much with the object of picking up passengers, as of giving the guard an opportunity of relieving the monotony of his occupation by prolonged conversation with the folks that are called station-masters.

There are many tempting places *en route*, but you are advised not to accept the invitation of any one of them to take up your abode there. The resources of the inns are limited in a way that is frequently distressing. In one hotel the landlady asked me, while I was taking my soup, what I should like for the next course. I suggested trout, and forthwith the son of the establishment went a-fishing. When the next course had been caught and cooked I was again requested to state my desires. I thought of mutton, but deemed it inadvisable to ask for it, as it takes longer to grow a lamb than to catch a trout, and I contented myself with bread and cheese.

At Bastia you are within reach of the birthplace of Paoli, the leader of the people in the last of those fierce and mostly unsuccessful rebellions against the control of foreign powers. His name, the Father of the People, is sufficient evidence of the respect in which his countrymen held him. It is interesting to visit the place where he was born, the final resting place of his ashes, for to the little hamlet of Stretta they were brought some twenty years ago.

The house is still a "mere village cabin, standing on a granite rock; a brooklet runs immediately past the door. Two or three small acacias and a mulberry tree stand in front of it, and a few stray pigs and a cat saunter round the entrance." Inside there is now a small chapel, with a marble-crowned vault in the centre. "In one corner is a bust of the deceased, and near it the slab which covered his tomb in England; a small altar and about a dozen funeral crowns hanging round the wall complete the decoration.

"On the first floor are two or three ordinary rooms, whitewashed and cleaned up. The largest of these is, or was, intended for a library. A large new chestnut case stands there empty, and presumably it was designed for the books which are lodged at the school.

"In another room are the remains of an altar, on the top of which are mixed in desperate confusion a gun, a sword, a couple of flags, a missal, a plaster cast, a modern service book, and a collection of lumber. An important-looking inventory of the relics of Paoli is in the room, and probably a memorial card will be handed to you. The whole place is a mere peasant's cottage, none too well cared for.

"Yet this actually is the birthplace of the great administrator, and here his ashes rest, probably as he wished, for he was no lover of luxury; and it is told of him, that when he arrived at Naples, having been elected general, finding

that his brother had had glass put into the windows of the cottage to make it more comfortable, he at once broke every pane with his stick, saying: 'I do not mean to live in my father's house like a duke, but a born Corsican.'"

Bastia will not let you forget Napoleon any more than Ajaccio will. In the new part of the town stands his statue. He is shown with bared breast, and his limbs scantily draped in some Roman garment! I am not certain that the costume is really Roman, but I am positive that Napoleon never went far from his bathroom in any attire at once so ridiculous and so inadequate. Further speculations on the figure give rise to the query as to what would have happened had he attempted to wield the sceptre that he holds in his left hand, while encumbered with the loose and flowing draperies that even in this sunny land seem so out of place, especially in such an exposed situation. Statues of Napoleon are not common in Corsica. There are one or two at Ajaccio, and one at Bastia, and these are all of which I know. I suspect they were put there for the benefit of the tourist, who would naturally seek them, for the people of the island are not so proud of Napoleon as one would at first expect. In the eyes of his fellow-countrymen he made one serious and stupid mistake. Although he was born a Corsican, when he became the ruler of France, he actually gave himself out as French. For this he has never been forgiven. The Corsican regards all foreigners with profound contempt.

Love of country is the dominant passion of this, as of many other mountain peoples, and Napoleon, by abjuring his nationality, not merely cast contempt on the land of his birth, but lowered himself by becoming a member of a nation so very inferior in every respect to the one from which he sprang. Such is the Corsican view of the matter. The statue is appropriately placed looking out over the harbour. In the distance can be seen the blue outline of the little island of Elba, and in the night time, when all the people have gone to bed, and only the stars in the heavens above and the lights at the mastheads of the little vessels below are awake, the stony lips of the marble warrior curl with contempt for the folly of the foes who dreamt that so much power could be confined within so little space. But when the morning comes the face resumes its wonted calm, and stands like a stone sermon, preaching the vanity of human ambition.

Where Bastia is new it is uninteresting. It tries to be gay, and fails; pretends to be lively, and is not. But where the city is old there is a charm that is not to be captured by the pen. Stone staircases run up and down from one street to another, and twist in and out in a perfectly bewildering fashion. Stone staircases lead down to cellars that are houses, and to muddy alleys that are streets. The colours, born of age, dirt, and a general disregard of cleanliness, are superb. The odours, arising from the same causes, are equally striking, but not usually recognized as

equally artistic. By widely opening the eyes and tightly closing the nose, one sense can be gratified to the full, while the other is held in temporary but wise restraint. And the houses! They are not houses; they are gigantic stone rabbit warrens. In some of these huge collections of tenements three or four hundred people are herded together, under one roof, or rather under what remains of the roof. Communication between the different storeys is made by means of a battered staircase, whose only source of light is a small hole in the wall. Descending one of these broken, refuse littered, badly lighted, eccentrically cork-screwed series of steps is well nigh as perilous as ascending Mont Blanc, and much less pleasant. The steps are littered with refuse, children, cats, puppies, and other inconsiderable trifles.

There are several churches in Bastia, including a cathedral, but none of them are of any architectural value or historical interest. The church of St. Croix, however, contains a large black crucifix, about which, as about many other precious relics, a legend has twined itself. One dark night some anchovy fishers saw a cross floating on the water. The halo of light that surrounded it was obviously a signal that it would have been criminal to neglect. The cross was taken to land and placed in the church of St. John the Baptist. The next night the same fishermen saw the same cross in the same place in the sea. Once more they rescued it, but this time they took it to the church of St. Croix, where it has since remained quite contentedly, never

again exhibiting the slightest desire for any more midnight baths or perambulations.

The beauty spot of Bastia is generally supposed to be Le Vieux Port, a stone basin of blue water, surrounded by a mass of tall houses coloured externally pale blue, pink, yellow, and light green. In the blazing sunshine the dirt is forgotten, the smells unheeded. The eye rests contentedly, enchantedly, on the bright, gay, quaint scene, and even refuses to travel to the bush-crowned hills beyond.

IN GERMANY

XII

MARCHING THROUGH GERMANY

THERE were ten of us, eight boys and two men, all Scouts from the County School, Harrow. We were pursuing our camping experiments begun on the school ground during the summer term. We joined a boat at Tilbury, changed into another at Rotterdam, and forsook her at Mannheim for the rail to Baden. There, under the guidance of the State Forest Department, we pitched our first camp, and thence, despite the wind and the weather that made the summer of 1912 proverbial, we tramped south to Basel.

We carried, in addition to the necessary changes of clothing, and the indispensable toilet requisites, three tents, four Baby Primus stoves, five down quilts, three waterproof ground sheets, five frying pans, eleven saucepans (about five too many), and knives, forks, spoons, and other oddments intended for use as necessity might demand. Owing to the particularly light and portable character of our equipment, the average weight per person was not more than twelve pounds, and twelve pounds, properly packed in a ruck-sack—with the down pillow, not the frying pan, next your back—is a weight to which you grow accustomed in ten

minutes, and which you forget in half an hour. We were self-contained, free to go wheresoever we would. We had our own hotel, bedroom and kitchen with us, and as for drawing-room and gardens, there was the whole length of the wooded slopes of the Schwarzwald, where Nature has spent herself in proving how mean and narrow are the finest buildings that man has yet provided for the accommodation of man.

After the first two or three days we could pitch or strike camp in fifteen minutes. We came to a bit of level turf near running water, and sheltered from the wind, and we remarked that the place was good. Before you could find another, there were three brown lawn houses with poles and ropes all set, a water-proof covering on the ground to keep out the damp, a woollen covering over that to keep out the cold, ruck-sacks for pillows, with smaller pillows of down atop, a down quilt for every two occupants, and a Primus stove roaring out its message of coming tea or soup. It is the life of the tramp and the gipsy, with the feeling behind it all that you need not do it unless you please, and can give it up when you are displeased. When displeasure creeps in I do not know, and neither do any of my companions.

With the setting of the sun you seek the shelter of the tent and the warmth of the quilt, for it is cold at nights, even in a warm summer when one is inland and at a height of three or four thousand feet, in this part of the world. In the wretched summer of 1912 we more than once supplemented

the quilt with a blanket or two from the nearest hotel or house, and not once would one of the lenders take a farthing of hire for the extra covering they supplied. With the rise of the sun one must be up and away, for it will not be possible to tramp with comfort when the noontide heat beats down upon the hillside. So we wake in the dawn, wash in the mountain torrent, feel the last cold, lingering wind of the night-time cool and fresh upon the body, take hot draughts of tea from the singing saucepan, eat great slabs of the rich brown, wholesome bread that some colour-blind folk call black, marvel at the creaminess of the butter and the sweetness of the honey, shoulder the pack and off again for another march through long avenues of pine and larch, over banks of heather and fern.

Sometimes we are enveloped in mist upon the summit of a peak, sometimes sunning ourselves beside a leaping, chattering, boy-like torrent, sometimes stretching ourselves full length on the turf and wondering whether it is all a dream, if we are really English boys and masters in a land where there is no noise and no worry, only flowers and fresh air, only the passing of the clouds and the sighing of the branches as they bend before the rising winds.

There was one boy—we called him the Engineer—who asked, after a three days' tramp without the sight of inn or house or shop, "When shall we come to a town?" He was hungry for the sight of his fellow-man. He was more interested

in the engines on the Rhine boats than in the scenery on the Rhine banks, and more familiar with the locomotive that took us to Triberg than with the waterfall that greeted us when we got there. But he was a cheerful, uncomplaining soul, and he had his uses. When the pump of the Primus stove refused to act, or the tent bulged in and made a basin for the rain, it was always the Engineer that set things right. And he got his due sight of towns. At Cologne, Strasburg, Freiburg, and Basel there were the great cathedrals, at Heidelberg the wonderful castle, at Mannheim the American-planned town and, if the poetry of it all did not penetrate far into his young nature, he could yet murmur at the skill of the builders that flung the fretted spires towards heaven, and find a pleasing humour in the sculptures of a mediaeval age.

But a tramp camp is not merely scenery and sights. It is much more than that; it is a school. It tests the good Scout. One boy leaned against a support over the edge of a waterfall. The support gave way and the boy fell, but the others caught him by the foot and knew how to get him safe on land again. Another boy got a bruise, a third a sprain, and yet a fourth a blister, but the boy with the Ambulance badge was always at hand with his bandage or ointment, and the camp doctoring was never a failure. The chefs learned more of the varieties of sausage and soup than they will ever practise in their mother-land. Nearly every boy tore his trousers or wore holes

in his stockings, and such repairs as were necessary had to be done by the owners of the garments. Paul, our French companion, was very hard on his trousers. First he darned the holes ; then he patched the darns with pieces cut from inside the hems ; finally the trousers gave out altogether, and he was glad to borrow another pair from the box that met us at intervals of a week or so with fresh supplies of sound and unsoiled apparel.

For a set of boys who had never been out of the south-east of England there were lessons, too, of other kinds. The Scoutmaster says if you hop about on wet stones in a mountain stream it is just possible you will slip. You do not believe him, and try, and the result is you spend a day in a tent wrapped up in a mackintosh, learning that age knows something after all. Still, the Scoutmaster only learned his lessons in the same way, so many years ago. The young and energetic find it hard to believe that too rapid a pace up a hillside tires, or, till it comes their way, to know that it is more fatiguing to go down steep hills than to go up them.

But one of the greatest lessons of all is that German is a real language, that there are actually people who speak it, and use it to buy chocolate with. To feel oneself helpless in front of an inquisitive peasant, or worse, an indignant policeman, and to have to turn to the Interpreter for assistance means so much to these young Britons. There will be more reality in the German verbs and declensions next term.

And the cost of it all? Five pounds for nearly a month! To feed a boy on fruit, bread, butter, honey, fresh milk and vegetables, soup, sausage, and occasional doses of meat, works out at about a shilling a day. Parties of scholars and teachers, not fewer than ten in number, may travel half fares on German railways, and if the third class be chosen you can go from one end of the Black Forest to the other for a few shillings.

There need be no fear of discourtesy or unkindness. Officials of all grades, from the humble postman to the highest general, will give a helping hand to all who seek for aid in a courteous manner. The boys do not throw stones, and the peasants do not jeer. To be an Englishman in this land of woods and streams is to be received with open arms. My pleasantest memories of that month, a month crowded with pleasant memories, are two, both connected with German boys. In the one they stayed with us two nights in a log hut, hidden far from the gaze of tourist or sportsman, and there they waited on us like servants, cooking and washing for us, and showing us the beauties of their retreat. In the other case a heap of village boys gave us a welcome that is described in the next chapter. Always we had the feeling that the world and we were very young, and that same world a wondrous wide and open book where the oldest of us had but scarcely scanned a page, and the youngest of us might read for ever and be never staled with sameness.

XIII

A CAMP FIRE

We had neared the end of our journey when we received an invitation to visit a body of Scouts in the village of Ziegelhausen, near to Heidelberg. The opportunity of fraternizing with our foreign comrades was too good a one to be missed, and we accepted the invitation.

After a short stay at Heidelberg we set out along the Neckar valley to the village of the Red-tiled Houses. We made our way by the side of the swiftly-rushing stream, along a valley famed for its wooded heights and romantic prospects. Half an hour or so brought us to our destination. Here we were met, not merely by the Scouts, but by half the village. None of the boys wore any uniform, but they gave us the customary salute, and the hearty handshake that is born of good will and a common aim. One after another the youngsters stepped out of the crowd, their faces aglow with the delight of seeing the strangers who had tramped through so many miles of their fascinating country.

Fiddles and guitars were produced on all sides, and soon the air was full of the sounds of old German folk-tunes and marches, varied with the

chattering of the unemployed, and the sympathetic comments of the inhabitants of the village upon our appearance and equipment. A few of the older boys set to work to build a log fire on the banks of the river. It had been a wet day, and the wood was difficult to light; but some one got a can of petroleum and assisted the matches, and soon the cheery blaze was lighting up the gradually gathering shadows that came with the setting of the sun. Close to the fire were tables and chairs, borrowed from a neighbouring inn, and on these we deposited ourselves and our baggage while the supper was prepared. Into two great saucepans were put respectively piles of potatoes and strings of appetizing sausages. The amateur cooks superintended the proper treatment of the food, the musicians played to the pots to make them boil the more quickly, and the youngest fry of all clambered into the trees and hung them with Japanese lanterns to light the tables and to make a new firmament under the spreading branches.

We took our meal in an almost solemn silence, except when the fiddles burst into melody, for we were too tired to speak to each other, and only a few of our hosts knew English, even as few of us were acquainted with the language of the Fatherland. Just as I was finishing my last potato I was touched on the shoulder by a merry-faced imp of about ten or eleven, and, turning round, found him timidly offering me a dish of salad made at his own home. It was his contribution to the

feast of welcome. I had no time to express my thanks, for, before I could place the refreshing offering upon the table, the donor had disappeared and shyly hidden himself amongst his companions.

When the supper was over the meeting devoted itself entirely to music. There was no beer and no tobacco, for the German Scout officer forswears both forms of indulgence while in uniform or with his followers. We made a big circle round the huge bonfire. The English contingent were seated on the borrowed benches; the German officers had a few old garden chairs, and the rest of the company stood. The circle was two or three deep. The inner ring was filled by the Scouts, the outer one by the other children from the village who were not Scouts, and behind all came the villagers.

The boys of Ziegelhausen proceeded to give us an entertainment. It consisted of marches both played and sung, of songs patriotic, sentimental, and comic. The accompanying instruments included the mouth-organ, the accordion, the guitar, the mandoline, and the fiddle. The drums were only requisitioned in the marches. The whole of the music performed was of ancient origin; it was all to be found between the covers of one book, a small, handy pocket volume, full of good things, culled by wise men from the rich treasures of folk-music that Germany possesses. Each song had the air printed in the Old Notation, and at the beginning of the book were instructions how to vamp accompaniments in the several keys upon the guitar.

The performance was full of interest, not so much on account of the performers as of the audience. One could not honestly say that either the singing or the playing was good ; the spirit in which it was offered was admirable, and the vim with which it was all executed was infectious; but it was the crowd in the background that struck the most distinctive note. It was the perfection of good order and good manners. No one spoke during the songs ; no one offered rude remarks about the visitors or their hosts ; no one tried to make jokes about the primitive character of the concert, or of the efforts of the several contributors. They stood attentively for close on two hours, laughing with the comic man, sighing with the sentimental one, joining in the choruses and the applause, but never once doing the slightest thing to mar the complete harmony of the welcome to " our brothers from the other side of the Channel." Fancy an English crowd under the same conditions, and the rude jokes of the village hobbledehoy, or the rough horse-play of those of his companions who did not consider themselves wits and humorists!

About ten o'clock, the Scoutmaster asked me at what time I would like the concert to terminate, because, said he, " These boys will go on till midnight if you wish, as this is a very special occasion." I suggested that as we had to rise at five in the morning, it had better terminate at once in order to give our boys a complete rest. He accepted the suggestion, and gave orders for the

last solo, a humorous one, about a young man putting a button in a collection-plate instead of a coin, with the troubles that ensued when he was discovered, and then he said, " You would like to sing your National Anthem." So we stood at attention, with the full Scout salute, and our ten English hearts and lungs, with one accord, sang lustily in the firelight and under the branches on the Neckar bank the first and only verse we knew of " God save the King." All the German Scouts who had instruments joined in the accompaniment, and the crowd watched and listened as attentively and respectfully as if we had been ten kings chanting an unheard melody to an audience of princes.

This was followed by the German National Anthem, a round of hand-shaking, the orderly and quiet departure of the villagers, and the wending of our own boys to their beds of thick straw, spread on the floor of an upper room in the little house that a local admirer had given to the Scouts of Ziegelhausen as their head-quarters.

The Scoutmasters stood for a few moments in quiet conversation after the boys had gone, and, just before they said their own adieus, a young woman pushed suddenly into their midst, thrust a great bouquet of flowers into the hands of the English visitors, and, before we could say one word of thanks for the dainty offering, fled into the darkness, with no other farewell than a joyous laugh and a cheery " *Auf Wiedersehn.*"

When our hosts had bidden us *Gut Pfad*—the

German Scouts call themselves *Pfadfinders*—we wended our way down to the river bank for a few moments of quiet talk ere turning in for the night, and the thought that was uppermost in the minds of both of us was the remark made by a German Scout when we left Freiburg, " Let old people quarrel and talk about fighting if they will ; we Scouts are brothers the world over."

DOWN THE DANUBE

XIV

PASSAU

PASSAU is one of those places whose names are familiar to the traveller going to Munich or Vienna, but through which he is hurried rapidly by the train, without a thought that it might be worth his while to break the journey. It is the starting-point of the passenger service on the Upper Danube, where the comfortable boats of the Danube Steamship Company begin their long journey to the Black Sea. And most of the people who come to Passau to catch the boat rarely allow themselves much time to explore this little out of the world town where a mediaeval atmosphere sits brooding ever over the banks and towers.

I never hurry—that is, voluntarily—and having set foot in this Bavarian town, romantically situated on a rocky neck of land at a point where two tributaries enter the Danube, I was not going to be taken out of it before I had explored every nook and corner. So, instead of bargaining with the cabby to drive me to the boat, I arranged to be driven to the best hotel.

The proprietor of the establishment, mistaking us for Americans, ushered us into a large but over-upholstered room, and bowed with that particular

blend of pride and humility that can only be properly exhibited by the keeper of a large hotel in the presence of a wealthy client. I was afraid there might be some discrepancy between the estimate of my host and myself as to my financial importance, so, with faltering German, and a sad display of courage, I inquired :

" How much ? "

" Seven marks "—and seven bows, each well worth a mark.

" Too dear," I stammered.

" But it is the best."

" Yes. But I don't want the best. Have you got one at five ? "

I ought to have said " three," but as I had been mistaken for a seven mark man, I did not like to depreciate myself too much. We got a five mark room, a good room, but with an outlook into a narrow alley. The windows of the houses on the other side of the alley looked straight into those of the hotel, and I watched a pretty Fraulein ironing clothes, until she saw me and drew across the window a piece of sacking that did duty for a curtain, and shut out the view. The less you pay the more fun you get, as a rule. Comfort and luxury may accompany extravagance, but the heart of your true traveller rejoiceth not in these things.

It was Sunday when we arrived. All the shops were closed ; the people were quiet and well-behaved, and dressed in their very best clothes. Most of them carried prayer-books, as though they

TOWER ON THE INN: PASSAU.

[*Facing page* 136

had been to afternoon service. Again, in the evening, there was another display of devotional literature and conventional respectability. I was quite impressed by the orderliness and quietness of the place, and almost forgot I was in a continental town.

It was not much use going to church, as we did not understand the language well enough to follow the service; so we wandered by sundry steps and zigzag paths down to the Custom House, where the boats arrive and depart. I could have gone by a straighter and cleaner route, but I have a fancy for subterranean passages, back streets, and blind alleys. They make up in interest what they lack in cleanliness. We arrived in due course at the open space in front of the steamer pier. On one side was the Custom House, for Passau is on the border between Austria and Germany. Here floated the blue-and-white banner of Bavaria, and the black-and-yellow one of Austria. Behind us was the imposing Gothic Rathaus, below which was a Rathauskeller, which we did not enter; and in front of us were chairs and tables, where we proposed to linger.

Before us lay the Danube, the river we had come to see and to sail upon. It flowed silently but rapidly, bright bubbles of foam bursting in the sunlight as the stream hurried along. On the opposite bank, the cliffs, clothed with trees and crowned with an ancient fortress, rose precipitously above the rushing waters. From the summit of this cliff can be seen the ancient town, rich

in churches and other buildings, the valleys of the three rivers that here mingle their several streams, and the dark, wooded heights of the four imposing mountain ranges that look down upon this zigzag city and divide it into four parts.

As we sat sipping our coffee, half a dozen pigeons came to pay us a visit. They were well bred, like the rest of the inhabitants. They flew over the cakes, without touching them, and then patiently sat at our feet to gather up the crumbs that fell from the table. I wonder what the pigeons were like in those stormy days when the people were not quite so calm as they were this sunny summer Sunday afternoon, in those days when their bishops were glad to take the shortest possible route up the rocks, and seek shelter in the grey and gloomy fortress on the tree-crowned height from the civic broils that were raging below.

I went to the church on Monday, in fact to all the churches that were open. None of these had imposing exteriors, and the interiors had all suffered, some sixty years ago, from that distressing form of sacrilege known as restoration. Yet, for all that, they were not without interest. There was, certainly, an abundance of cheap paint and tawdry images; but there were also dadoes of ancient red marble tombstones, friezes of carved and gilded wood both ancient and modern, and in St. John's Church an east wall which was one mass of gilded and coloured carving of respectable antiquity and distinct artistic merit.

Another ramble led me to the Domplatz, on one

side of which rises a building of distressing architecture but of some historical significance, for it is on the site of the former Canon's residence, in which, nearly four hundred years ago, was signed the Treaty of Passau between the Emperor Charles V and the Elector Maurice of Saxony, establishing religious toleration. Being a very poor student of history, I have not the faintest idea what the terms of that treaty were, but any evidence that such a thing as religious toleration existed so many years ago came as a pleasant and refreshing surprise.

Facing this building is the Cathedral. It was born in the fifth century, restored after a fire some six or seven hundred years later, and then suffered various alterations that have left it a mass of ridiculous detail and stupid stucco decoration. The enormous pictures that it possesses have no value except that definable in terms of area. Poor old cathedral! It must have been a fine place before the eighteenth century architects took it in hand and converted its mediaeval glories into a hotch-potch of florid rococo patchwork. Part of the choir remains untouched, and also a small door leading into the Domhof, a kind of quiet square, round which are arranged a number of chapels, the spaces between the doors being decorated with old tombstones and a few carved capitals that still possess a little of their original beauty of workmanship and design. But it is pleasanter still by the side of the river, where old houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

make a brave show, where forts and towers tell tales of bygone strife, or in the streets where the old women sell ripe fruit under rotting umbrellas, and where dark archways give cool hiding-places from the fierce heat of the sun.

Passau is not a place to leave in a hurry. There are walks in wooded valleys, heights to climb, excursions to make, lively traffic to attract the gaze of the lounger at the café, strangers coming and going from all parts of the world, bent, not on seeing Passau, but on getting away as quickly as they can down the broad river that from century to century pursues its uninterrupted course from the dark slopes of the Black Forest to the dark waters of the Black Sea.

XV

DOWN THE DANUBE TO LINZ

EVERYBODY goes down the Rhine ; comparatively few go down the Danube. Each river has its own attractions, historical, legendary, and pictorial. Comparisons are out of place as well as odious, and we will try to resist the temptation to make them, partly from a desire to avoid controversy and partly because other folks have already done the wicked deed only too often.

The usual trips on the navigable part of the Upper Danube are from Passau to Linz, and from Linz to Vienna. The local steamer leaves Passau daily at three in the afternoon during the summer months, and arrives at Linz about seven. Here the night is spent. Passengers can sleep on board for the modest sum of two francs, or take their rest in a more luxurious manner at one or other of the many hotels that cater for the visitor to Linz. The journey is resumed the following morning at nine o'clock, and terminates at Vienna at about six o'clock on the evening of same day. The first-class fare is fourteen and a half francs, which cannot be considered expensive for a two days' journey by steamer.

The Danube between Passau and Linz is perhaps

the most beautiful stretch of the navigable part of the river, though I must confess a preference for that part of the river where the steamer is unknown, the big hotel non-existent, and the tourist hard to find. During the short journey to Linz the traveller, however, sees much that is characteristic of the great river in its upper reaches. The beauty and the variety of the scenery, the distant mountains, the castles and other ruins upon the wooded banks, the legends that cluster thickly about every mossy stone or hoary battlement are full of interest for all those whose object in travel is not a new variety of beverage or a cheaper brand of cigar.

The steamer, though known as an "express," stops at so many places that the contemplation of the speed of a slow boat has a rather paralysing effect on the imagination, for, comfortable though the steamers are, the limits of the deck are soon found, and too long a journey in too confined a space will do much to counteract the effect of pleasant scene or exciting story. Most of the stopping places are rich in picturesque surroundings, and would probably repay lengthened visits; but where there is so much to see in the world, and so little time in which to see it, the traveller with limited time at his disposal would be wise, as a rule, to avoid too detailed an exploration of the river's charms, and disembark only where the steamer makes her final calls.

One thing I do not understand about these steamers. The second-class passengers get the

best view and the freshest air; the first-class passengers are behind, with the funnel as the most conspicuous object in the foreground, and where they can get a plentiful shower of smuts when the awning is removed. If it be a fine warm sunny day, the second-class is distinctly preferable to the first, except that it is more crowded.

No sooner has the steamer quitted her moorings than a very delightful scene is disclosed to view. Behind lies the beautiful peninsular city, nestling between high banks that guard its triple stream and in front are other high banks covered with green to their summits, and bordered by a fringe of willows at the foot. Here and there bare rocks peep out, patches of attractive aridity in the broad, verdant boundaries of the river. A railway line follows the curving highway of the current, but, hidden as it is by shrubs, it requires a whole railway train to indicate its position, and when the train does come it only adds a note of hilarity to the landscape, for the weird little engine, dragging its few smoke-soiled carriages wearily behind is more amusing than a disturbing influence in the scene. Soon steep-wooded mountains rise up on either side, but occasionally cottages or hamlets are seen on the banks with their small attendant patches of cultivated green.

There are tiny ravines where a trickle of water falls merrily down the face of the rocks and tries to be a waterfall, and one of severer aspect that feels all the weight of its importance as the boundary between Austria and Bavaria on that

bank. Here is a castle, perched high on the cliff, walls grey with the greyness of age and death, and roofs red as the stains of the blood that was shed when crime was as common as thirst in these baronial residences. There is a peasant's hut clinging to the banks, a limpet to a rock, with wooden veranda and tiny windows, and the beauty of usefulness in every line of it.

They are a religious people in Bavaria, and on projecting points of rock the cross proclaims its message to the worldly hurrying past. There are images and shrines in all kinds of nooks and crannies—the offerings of the grateful for benefits received, the supplications of the faithful for benefits to come. And, if you were in amongst the woods that dress the landscape, you would find grown men and women kneeling before shrine or cross or image, and not ashamed to be seen saying their prayers in the light of open day.

The speed of the current is enormous, and the boat whizzes along at a pace that is never realized unless you happen to be near the banks, when the rushing backwards of trees and stones tells the pace at which you are going to the sea. There are rapids and whirlpools and hidden rocks, but the navigable channel is marked by a series of whitened stones, and the pilots know every inch of the stream. The passengers aboard are a cosmopolitan crowd, though few are English. There is a pretty German girl with a blue motor veil wound round her head to set off her demure mouth and twinkling eyes ; an Austrian sports-

man with a cheeky feather in his cap ; a student from Vienna, coming home from a walking tour, with a ruck-sack on his back that makes one's own ache at the sight of it ; and a nun, whose face is the image of purity as it shines out at you from its frame of black.

When the steamer stops, barefooted children rush down to see the fun, women in blue aprons, blue skirts, blue bodices, everything blue, and all shades of blue come to fetch or deliver a parcel, while crowds of loungers hang about under the heavily fruited horse-chestnut trees and make silly remarks about those who do not lounge. Not the least conspicuous feature at some of the smaller towns is the number of uniforms, dark blue, peacock blue or slatey grey, and the curious truncated chimney-pot hats that accompany them. Less conspicuous, but more heartrending, are the girls with no hats and pretty aprons, whose conversation is a laugh and whose smile is a benediction for all those upon whom it falls.

The Danube is one long series of pictures, beautiful whether in the sunlight or the rain, for if it rains the greens grow gray or blue, and in the varying depths of the mist there is a subtle charm that affords a memorable contrast to the gayer and more insistent aspects of the sunlit landscape. After passing Neuhaus we emerge into a broad plain of no particular beauty, and yet, after the narrow valley, there is a sense of freedom in the widened outlook, while in the distance the snow-clad peaks of the Styrian and the Austrian

Alps keep sending the eternal message of the hill-lands across the emerald flats.

The river, as if tired of flowing ever in one current, breaks up into innumerable branches, curving round and between a succession of islands that lie so thickly together, that often the eye fails to distinguish the islands from the mainland. Some are large, and green to the water's edge, others mere handfuls of white sand and pebbles, where the water-birds seek a little change and call upon and chat with their brothers of the land.

Then we get a stretch of cultivated hillside, a patchwork of emerald green and brownish red, with a white house in one square of the pattern, and a red spire in another, mingled with the dark green squares of the timbered areas and the brilliant splashes of sunlit ripening grain. Towards Linz the river narrows again. The twin towers of the pilgrimage church on the high hill to the left come into view, rocks and pines crowd down to the edge of the water, and then round another bend comes the first glimpse of the city, a long line of whitened cottages at the foot of the wooded slopes, like the edge of a breaker on a rocky shore, and then, as we get nearer, a higher and more broken crest of house-tops and of spires.

After this succession of natural delights I thirsted for a glimpse of humanity and sought it —what a contrast—in a music-hall! It was well worth seeing, was the Kolosseum. The floor of the hall was divided into two parts, in the first of which were round tables where people ate sand-

wiches and drank beer, and sported the latest fashions in hats and clothes. At the back was the Tribunien, a series of perpendicular steps with wooden backs to them. These were the cheap seats—admission tenpence. With my unconquerable partiality for back streets and back alleys I paid my tenpence, and for over an hour paralysed myself on the hard seats with the still harder backs. Amongst the tables moved numerous waiters in that orthodox attire that makes them look like gentlemen and gentlemen like waiters, but in the soaring tiers of the Tribunien our wants were attended to by a number of corpulent, sloppily dressed charwomen who brought round baskets of hot sausages that my neighbours ate in their fingers, holding the necessary condiments the while in the hollow of the left hand. They were cheery souls, greasy it is true, and unconventional in their manners, but they made me welcome, and it went to my heart to decline a morsel of toothsome sausage, presented graciously and gratuitously between a grimy thumb and finger.

XVI

LINZ

LINZ, as the guide-books tell you, is the capital of Upper Austria, and is situated on the right bank of the Danube, as you can see for yourself if you are minded to look upon a map, which you probably are not, being an Englishman. There are sixty thousand people on one bank, and on the other, in a suburb which bears a distinctive name, at least 13,000 more. The connexion between the two is the visible one of an iron lattice bridge.

In the market-place are the everlasting umbrellas that seem of little protection against rain, but offer a welcome shelter from the sun. It rained while I was in Linz, and that is my apology for visiting the Museum. But it was worth the while. The effect of museums has been beneficently arranged by Providence. On a fine day they cast a gloom over your spirits and force you into the open, where Nature intended you to be; but in wet weather they lighten the gloom, and the very dullness of the outer places lends an artificial brightness to the rows of old bones, plates, and other objects that delight the hearts of some and weary the legs and the brains of more others. Linz museum is good, because it is small,

and can be seen without undue fatigue. It is interesting because first of all it shows, in a series of furnished rooms, the conditions under which the ancestors of the people lived, and, secondly, because it refuses to put many of its curiosities under glass cases, and literally leaves them at the mercy of the visitor. Theft would be an easy matter at Linz; capture might be equally easy, for all I know. Anyhow, there is the delight of resisting temptation.

I had been told that a lover of nature would find the situation of the town delightful, and the surroundings a continual source of enjoyment. The praise was, I venture to assert, a little too flattering; but it was the cause of one ramble in the immediate vicinity, and for that reason I forgive the enthusiastic Austrian who tempted me to spend days in Linz when minutes were about as much as I could afford. I wandered round by a big brewery and climbed to the top of a small hill called the Freinberg, crowned with a massive tower of no architectural or historical importance. There was quite a respectable view of the surrounding country from the top of the hill. In front lay the silver ribbon of the winding Danube, a tumbled heap of mountains and hills beyond, these dotted with patches of dark green woods, green fields, and brown squares of newly-ploughed earth.

Some distance farther on there was another tower near enough to the river to dispel the idea of the silver ribbon. The Danube was more like yellow ochre than silver. It was seen for what it

is, a swiftly flowing highway, dividing and yet uniting the several sections of Linz and that big suburb that is fastened to the other end of the bridge.

The roofs and walls of the houses as seen from the height presented a soft and pleasing harmony of reds and browns that lost nothing in effectiveness because of the green hillsides beyond.

"The lover of magnificent mountain scenery should also on no account fail to climb the 'Postlingberg,' or, if so minded, he can make the ascent at low cost by the electrical railway." Now I have an idea that the above words were placed in the book, where I found them, by the company that owns the electrical railway. There is not the slightest reason why anyone should linger in Linz in order to ascend the Postlingberg, either on foot or by means of the electric railway at a low cost. There are better views in hundreds of places, and more comfortable restaurants than the one that lays itself out to make hay while the tourist shines.

The finest thing in Linz is not the half-completed cathedral, nor the mountain scenery, nor the surroundings. Perhaps some will vote for the river, and I shall have to admit that there is much to be said for the claims of the Danube to first place; but I shall still be willing to engage in warfare on behalf of the oxen that belong to the brewery. In colour, in size, and in strength they are about as fine specimens of animals as can be seen. Oxen are common enough as beasts of burden in southern Europe, but such oxen as these are rare. Their

sleek creamy majesty was something to wonder at. And they belonged to the brewery, and so were probably maintained in this condition of splendour as an advertisement for the fattening and strengthening properties of somebody's beer. I was brought up to look upon the wine neither when red nor white, and to regard it and all its effects with becoming horror. But there must be something in beer after all if it can produce oxen like that. Some of the human consumers of the products of the brewery certainly rivalled the oxen in bulk, but fell far below them in dignity and beauty.

XVII

LINZ TO VIENNA

DURING this journey of about ten hours the steamer calls at many places, some of which are more easily reached by boat than by train, and the consequence is that the quay at Linz always presents a scene of singular animation just before the departure of the vessel. At first, the traveller is inclined to turn his gaze towards the point that he is leaving, in the endeavour to possess as long as possible the view of the beautifully situated river city, with its background of verdant hills. When the last outline has faded into the distance it is time enough to observe the forward aspect. A little disappointment is probably the first feeling that is aroused by the prospect, for instead of the precipitous hills that form the charm of the Danube above Linz a broadening plain extends on either side. The hills have retreated from the banks, but they are still near enough for one to enjoy their varied colouring and to distinguish between the dark green patches of the woods and the lighter tints of the cultivated fields. This first feeling of disappointment is not likely to endure for any length or time, as it is not long before the surroundings become once more attrac-

tive. It is characteristic of this river that, whereas its scenery is amongst the grandest in Europe, the finest points are often widely separated by areas that are comparatively uninteresting.

In these intervening stretches the tourist is inclined to yawn and talk about monotony, a result of a limited outlook. It is true that the population is rather thinly scattered, and that the traffic on the stream is somewhat small, but there is probably scarcely a mile of the journey that does not possess something worthy of the attention of him who travels with all his senses on the alert.

In the summer time crowds of children are to be seen bathing on the river and hailing the passing vessel with joyous cries and merry countenances, and the smile of a child would add a glory to the most arid spot on earth. There are soldiers building bridges as part of their annual training, and sufficiently indistinct at a distance to permit you to speculate as to whether they are soldiers or convicts. I say convicts advisedly, because the uniform they wear bears, when seen from afar, a distinct resemblance to the garb of those unhappy wretches who spend their days in Portland or Princetown.

On board the vessel itself there is always a wonderful variety of type. The pencil of the caricaturist would never lack material, the pen of the satirist or the humorist rarely rest. Here comes a newly married couple who seize two deck chairs, which they place in the best position on the ship. They arrange camp stools for the feet, and

then proceed to devour the contents of a huge basket of provisions that might have been provided by an efficient commisariat department for the inhabitants of the Ark. Love has not driven out appetite, though it is quite a debatable question whether the consumption of so many dainties may not drive out the gentle god, for love is closely allied to digestion, and the bilious and dyspeptic are rarely affectionate in their hours of trouble.

There is another married couple, from a different land, whose amusement takes another form. They, too, care little for the other passengers, and occupy more than their fair share of the available space. The husband photographs and rephotographs his partner in the matrimonial venture, with a lack of hurry or embarrasment that is exasperating to those who find the ground for their already limited promenade still further curtailed. There is a party of ladies from a far-off continent whose voices are heard all over the ship, expressing chiefly depreciatory comparisons between the Danube and the Hudson; and a few English, solid but comfortable, who speak to nobody, not so much because they are reserved or haughty, but merely on account of their usual inability to speak any language but their own.

Some people look at the banks and don't know where they are; some read guide-books and do know where they are, but don't look at the banks. There are men devoted to newspapers and women to needlework, to such an extent that

one wonders why they ever travel at all. The most popular man aboard is Baedeker, dressed in his scarlet and gold, and speaking everybody's language for a substantial financial consideration.

My own eyes travel, when not engaged in dodging the funnel to get a view ahead, from a sweet little German girl, who looks as though she ought to have a brother, to a new arrival at Linz, a variety of Austrian sportsman in a wonderful assortment of colours. He wore a brown hat with an impertinent feather, a dark blue coat, a shirt of five stripes, a vermilion tie, a green waistcoat, belt, knickerbockers, and stockings in yet two other shades of green, and light brown boots. He had a red face and a yellow moustache, and looked and carried himself like a duke. Despite the motley hues there was a harmony of colouring in the man's costume that bespoke either an artistic temperament or an artistic wife.

As you swing in and out amongst the low-wooded islands, you will notice more lines of whitened stones defining the fair way, and will come across groups of men engaged in mending the stone embankments, the ring of their iron tools upon the moist grey walls singing a tale of honest work that is pleasant to the ear of the sun-bathed idler on the deck. At Mauthausen, there are rich granite quarries, whence thousands of tons of stone are chipped for paving purposes every year. Great holes have been cut in the ancient cliffs that line the banks, and great piles of setts are built up upon the quays, useful doubtless, and cheap too,

but disturbing to the cyclist, and the very perfection of torture to generations of Austrians yet unborn, whose feet will ache on broiling summer days as they tread the too solid streets.

Timber is so plentiful upon the hillsides that we look instinctively for some evidence of its commercial value. And one does not look in vain, for at many spots there are great stacks of timber waiting for shipment in barges, or to be floated down the river in enormous rafts. The crews of these rafts are placed fore and aft, and they direct their craft by means of a perfect regiment of shovel-shaped paddles. In the centre of each raft is the shelter from the sun and the rain, a little lean-to of wood thatched with straw or leaves. You will get a glimpse of half the occupations of half the people of the country in this one day's journey, for besides watching the cutting and shaping of the logs, the blasting of granite and the making of bricks, you will see men and women mowing in the fields, water-mills grinding corn, and, sprinkled judiciously, little farm-houses with quaint balconies, roofs of tiles or thatch, and a cheery look about them that suggests internal comforts of a simple but substantial type.

While you have been busy noticing these and a hundred other objects illustrative of the life that is lived in the land of your passage, the country itself has again begun to reassert its claim to your attention. A wilder aspect begins to prevail ; the mountains draw nearer and nearer together and, ere long, they are flinging defiant messages at each

other across the narrowed stream. The towering cliffs overhead throw their dark green shadows athwart the foam-crested current which tears along in the narrowed valley, wild with rage and excitement.

And so you come to Grein, the "Pearl of the Danube." I have made up my mind to go back to Grein some day and just lie about as long as my vacation lasts. I shall not want to wander into the heart of the high-wooded hills amongst which the little town nestles, buried in a profusion of leaves and flowers; I shall not want to explore the hollows that penetrate the hillsides, and where the giants of old might well have stretched in lazy ease their hundred-fathom lengths; I shall not interview or photograph the men that work amongst the timber and who have felled and barked the trees that lie like big yellow pipe-stems at the feet of their stately and yet undisturbed brethren. I shall sit under the wall of the little castle where the wild clematis attracts the children, or perhaps linger by the shrine that some devout soul has erected upon the rocks, and where the impressive beauty of the surroundings will make me forget the calls of the tax-gatherer, and all the hundred and one tiny cares that disturb our working hours. All this I shall keep for my placid moods when the sun shines and the birds and the flowers have merry messages for my inward eyes and ears.

But when it rains, and the mists gather thickly about the pine stems, when the swollen current of

the stream and the angry roaring of the wind down the gully inspire me anew with restlessness and, maybe, some feeling of a far-off discontent, then I shall go down to the whirlpool—the "surging water"—where the Danube makes a sharp curve, and the current dashes itself against the faces of the almost perpendicular cliffs. Heedlessly rushes the river past all obstructions, and then, where I will not follow it, pursues a straighter and less violent course. Farther down, the bed grows narrower again; sombre forests and moss-grown rocks overhang the banks, and austerity is the dominant note.

This section of the Danube has yet another appeal to make, an appeal to the imagination, to our love of the romantic, the terrible, the mysterious, the heroic. I do not know how many castles there are between Linz and Vienna. I never counted, having too much with which to occupy my time in other ways. Perhaps there were a hundred, perhaps only twenty, but, as I look back, it seems to me that every hill had a castle, every castle a legend, and that stories of bloodshed and rapine were as thick as the trees upon the banks.

There were one or two castles that have left sharply cut images in my memory. Aggstein, for instance, the former abode of robbers, perched on the edge of a precipice, with high walls and few windows, difficult to attack, easy to defend. In olden days they threw the prisoners over the battlements, and chuckled as the wretches were

SCENERY ON THE DANUBE.

[*Facing page* 158

either stunned or drowned. To-day, the yellow grey walls, the bare surface of the granite, the background of green trees, and the overarching blue of the heavens make a fascinating picture. But I fancy the robbers of old cared little for these things, and took greater interest in the vastness of the foundations and the strength of the walls of their refuge.

Then there was Durnstein, where the story runs that Blondel sang his song to his imprisoned master Cœur de Lion. History says there is no truth in the legend; so much the worse for history. I pin my faith to the impossible, and can only say that if Blondel did not end his faithful wanderings here, he was guilty of grave bad taste in the selection of a less appropriate terminus.

The night before I left Linz, when I was visiting the music hall, one of the "gods," who had a smattering of English, told me to go to Vienna by train, as there was nothing to see on the river. I admit that I was scarcely in the right place in which to obtain authentic information on the subject, and that the value of the testimony was also impaired by the fact that my informant was not an Austrian but a German, born in Chicago. But he is not the first person who has told me there is nothing to see in some particular spot that I have afterwards found full of surprises. I always discard the advice, and astonish myself and my counsellor by my unbending obstinacy in following my own will—on a holiday.

XVIII

BETWEEN TWO CAPITALS

FROM Vienna, the capital of Austria, to Budapest, the capital of Hungary is, by water, a long day's journey of about twelve to fourteen hours. The boats leave Vienna at seven o'clock in the morning, and arrive at Budapest between seven and nine in the evening. Early rising has never appeared to me as a desirable virtue. I like to rise when the air has been warmed a little and the damp taken out of it. I hold undried air to be as dangerous to the health as undried sheets, and early rising a far more reprehensible practice than late retiring. So to avoid having breakfast at half-past five in a hotel, I went on board the Danube steamer the night before, paid my two francs for a berth, wrapped myself up in a blanket, and went to sleep to the sound of the waters kissing the side of the boat, an improvement in the way of midnight music to the rattle of the cabs over the cobbles in the streets. I awoke only when the jangling of the chains, the whirring of the paddles, and the shrieking of the syren notified the hour of departure.

I spent a few minutes, as I took my morning roll and coffee, in an inspection of the tariff of

wines and foods, always an interesting occupation in new surroundings. This tariff was printed in many languages, some of which rejoiced in the most appalling alphabets. I was already familiar with the list of charges as used on the Upper Danube, and which was printed in English, French, and German. I could understand this with fair ease, as I have learned English from my youth upwards. But now, as I began a journey down the Middle Danube, I found that the English had disappeared and that, while French and German had been retained, there was a bewildering array of indescribable symbols, that I afterwards discovered formed the alphabets of such wild tongues as Servian, Roumanian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian.

About half an hour after leaving the Austrian capital we come to the island of Lobau, four and a half miles long and three miles broad, one of the many hundreds of islands and islets that are strewn throughout the whole length of this mighty river. Some of them, as in this case, are so large, and the streams that cut them off from the mainland are so small, that it is not easy at all times to distinguish between island and mainland. As a rule, the banks are low and fringed with willows, behind which lie broad meadows. On the other side of the island of Lobau are the villages of Wagram, Aspern, and Essling, where Napoleon met the Archduke Charles in 1809. The battlefield is now a peaceful green level, with a background of tall chimney stacks, from which rise clouds of smoke almost as

pernicious as those that were belched forth from the mouths of the contending guns more than a century ago.

There are fewer passengers on this route than in other parts of the Danube, for the appearance of the country is distinctly less attractive. Vienna is the eastward limit of the average tourist's pilgrimage. If by any chance he goes farther towards the rising sun, he chooses a train and goes as fast as he can. He makes a mistake. There is no virtue in speed in a foreign land. The process of absorption to which every traveller amidst new surroundings should submit himself is a slow one. Besides, a river, like an individual, has a character of its own, not to be known in an hour, and not to be sampled by its moments of intense excitement. So I went from Vienna to Budapest by water, not to see gorges and mountains, but just to make a closer acquaintance with an important national highway that I had known when it was younger, gayer, and more frivolous.

I was not disappointed. There were the same objects of interest that I had seen elsewhere. The river flows through the same wide fertile plains, where wheat and other cereals are grown in great abundance, and where the dryness of the climate facilitates the manufacture of flour. With the praiseworthy intention of using the water-way to the fullest advantage, hundreds of floating mills have been placed in the current, and, as the stream goes by, it drives the wheels that grind the flour, and so adds a new benefit to those which it has

already conferred upon the countries through which it flows. The mills look very much like the toy Noah's Arks we played with in our nurseries, except for the big wheel on the side, which turns from morning to night.

Traffic, too, is now a trifle busier, and we are often afforded a sight of the fiery little steam tugs puffing and groaning as they drag behind them fleets of enormous barges. The barges are provided, at the stern, with most delightful little houses for the captain or the steersman, or some other member of the crew. These houses are as compact as a flat, always clean and brightly painted, and, in the summer, adorned with flowering plants. Mother sits outside, under a shelter, peeling potatoes or mending father's trousers, while babies, one, two or more in number, tease the ducks and the pigeons or the other animals that form a part of the domestic establishment. There are many less pleasant places than the toy houses on the clumsy barges of the Danube. As for the cargo of the barges it includes everything that a man ever wants to send or receive during the whole period of his mortal existence—hundreds of barrels of beer, a furniture van, a mail cart, mowing machines, threshing machines, sacks of grain, hampers of fruit, and a thousand and one trifles that are required amongst the members of the various small communities that fringe the river.

Some of the boats strike one as having a very ancient pedigree. The high prow, the stern oar, and other details speak of an ancestry almost as

remote as that of the river itself. There are fishing boats where the net is let down at the end of a long wooden lever pivoted on a pole in the centre of the boat, and raised again by the fisherman leaning on the other end with all his weight, much after the fashion in which water is raised from wells on the Plain of Hungary.

And the river itself, if uncharacterized by magnificence or great beauty, is not without a certain charm. The many islands, the broad open spaces of tranquil water, the peaceful meadows that greet the horizon, all tell a tale of quietness and rest that is soothing to the minds of those whose days are spent in laborious toil. In places a flash of turbulent foam-crested water shows the presence of whirlpools, eddies, rapids—not dangerous, for they lie outside the track of the steamer that passes them heedlessly or contemptuously by. The little water lanes between the islands make you wish for a canoe, a tent, a kettle, and freedom. You might camp here for years and never be disturbed, enjoying all those wonderful and strange effects of light which are only to be seen over broad, flat lands at the twilight or the dawn.

As the boat swings round a bend, the willows disappear from the banks, an opening is made to the fields, and here is a herd of cattle knee deep in the water, a flock of geese gabbling behind them, a hay-rick on the highest bit of land, and a thin column of blue smoke above the trees to the left and right. At another spot nets are hanging up to dry in the blazing sunlight, that makes opals

A LANDING STATION ON THE DANUBE.

[*Facing page* 164

of derelict fish scales, or perhaps the centre of attraction is a girl driving a flock of geese as we used to see her in the fairy tales, or a herdsman wending his lethargic way, followed by his faithful flock of pigs or goats. It all belongs to a home life so different from our own that I can never fathom the feelings of the man who thinks the journey monotonous.

Three hours away from Vienna we reach that narrowed part of the valley know as the Hungarian Gate, where the Little Carpathians on the one side, and the outlying spurs of the Alps on the other, try to get across to speak to each other. In the gap is the town of Pressburg, formerly the capital of Hungary. It was just the right place for a fortress, a barrier between the Austrian and Hungarian territories, for there are strong defences in the hills behind and swamps before. High above the town, on a small plateau, is the fort or castle or palace, whichever you please to consider it. It is encircled by a high wall pierced by a massive and imposing gateway. The place is in ruins, the result of a fire in 1811. From the western tower there is a superb outlook over the vine-clad slopes of the Little Carpathians, the city, and the neighbouring hills and plains.

Soon after entering Hungary the Danube turns abruptly to the south and enters the Hungarian plain, one of the most fertile of the wheat lands of Europe, and then, after Esztergom with its huge Episcopal Palace has been left behind, the hills come close to us again, and we may neglect the

mill wheels and the barges for the wooded valley and the narrower course of the river. The most beautiful spot between Vienna and Budapest, Visegrad, soon appears with its double charm of picturesque situation and historic story. On the steep rocks rises a castle that was inhabited by the kings of Hungary as early as the eleventh century, one of whom converted much of the barren rock into a series of smiling gardens.

As the evening begins to close in, and you are perhaps getting weary of sitting for so many hours, Budapest comes into sight. On the right are the palatial buildings of Pest; on the left the hill of Buda, crowned with the royal palace and fort. It is well if it be dark when you arrive, for then the myriads of lights that line the banks, creep up the hillside, or flash from the mast-heads of the boats, will be reflected like another firmament in the broad bosom of the waters, and the tearing, screaming little ferry boats will scatter meteoric trails of fire athwart the rippled surface of the darkened stream.

XIX

THROUGH THE HUNGARIAN PLAIN

It was ten o'clock on a summer evening when the steamer unfastened her moorings and set off by way of the Danube from Budapest to cross the Plain of Hungary. The twin cities flashed us a million merry farewells from the twinkling lights that illuminated and beautified the surroundings. Almost due south the mighty river flows across the flat expanse of fertile land until it approaches the Servian frontier. Here it turns again to the east. The land through which it flows, once the bed of a great inland sea, is now one of the most productive areas in Europe.

There can be little doubt that the general opinion about this section of the Danube is that the scenery is monotonous and the towns too insignificant to be worth the trouble of visiting. I am not prepared to contest the verdict, but I have found it a useful plan in life to refuse to recognize monotony anywhere, and to concentrate all my attention, even in the most unpromising places, on finding all I can that is calculated to dispel disappointment. And the things I write of here are those I discovered for myself during the six and twenty hours that I spent in journey-

ing from the capital of Hungary to the last Hungarian town on the right bank of the Danube. I say discovered myself, for the guide-books and the books of travellers' stories severely neglect this section of the trip. I was not employed for the whole of the six and twenty hours in the work of exploration, for I spent the first nine of them in perfect sleep, oblivious of steamer, river, or plain.

When I rose in the morning we were tied up to the wharf at Mohacs (pronounced Mo-hatch). I scrambled on deck, carrying in my mind an idea of the landscape, gained from a previous examination of a map in a small atlas, that, from the bridge of the steamer, my eye would wander to a far distant horizon, across ground so level that every few yards of it would make a good cricket pitch without any rolling. I was speedily disillusioned.

A low fringe of trees along the banks effectively prevented any extensive panorama of potential cricket pitches, and shut off all the inland country as effectively if not as charmingly as a range of mountains. Rows upon rows of water-mills had already harnessed the current, and the dripping wheels were dropping showers of diamonds in the clear and sunny atmosphere, while the stones they turned inside the mill were grinding out showers of snow from the ripened golden grain. There were signs of a big town near at hand, and heaps of dirty slack and coal piled or stacked along the river bank. Crowds of boys and women, not of men, black as ink, moved from the coal heaps to the boat, wheeling big barrows laden with the fuel. They moved in

a ceaseless procession, a column of dusky flies, as they performed the useful if dirty function of coaling the boat. First came tons of slack ; next tons of briquettes. Lady passengers coming aboard picked up their skirts to avoid the dirt, and lady labourers, or at least some of them, turned their faces away from my impertinent camera, not wishing to be photographed in the unbecoming results of ther industry.

By nine o'clock, as we left the wharves and the long lines of Danube barges, the sun began to give us a foretaste of his power. Ere the day was over we had realized to the full, that there are places in Europe where it is possible to be really and uncomfortably warm. On account of the screen of verdure that lined the banks, we were unable to catch a glimpse of the level land that has twice been the scene of serious conflicts. Only three miles to the south-west of the town, the Turks brought Hungary under their cruel yoke in 1526 and almost on the same spot they were signally defeated in 1687, when an end was put to their hated supremacy in this part of Europe. It was here, when there was little new to claim attention, that I first fully realized that the term "blue Danube" is a most extraordinary misnomer. The colour of the water is rather that of a thin and somewhat unhealthy pea-soup, and all those whom I questioned, both then and after, assured me that at no time, and at no place, was the great highway of Central Europe ever of any other colour. Thus departed another illusion nourished

at the dancing academy and cherished from early youth.

As the scenery continued unattractive I went down amongst the third class passengers to see a little of real life. Hats, which were *de rigueur* up aloft, disappeared below to make way for handkerchiefs. A woman who knows how to frame her face in a handkerchief can often give points in attractiveness to the one with the ugly if fashionable hat. Many of the peasants wore no boots; others had shoes of cloth, but were without stockings. The prevailing tint in this motley assortment of oddments that did duty for clothes was blue. The women had blue skirts and blouses, the men wore blue suits. The coat of the boy who sold rolls to the hungry was of the same colour, as was also that of the cloth that kept the dust off the rolls when no one's appetite demanded purchase. Here and there a red handkerchief added the necessary relief, or a young girl turned up her skirt to show off the purple petticoat that was one of her treasures. But if you wanted variety of colour, the place in which to seek it was amongst the baskets of vegetables that were the property of some of the passengers. The haughty red of the tomatoes, the angry purple of the beet, the laughing yellow green of the tiny cucumbers, and the sober brown of the potatoes, were a feast of many hues. The people sat on bags, lounged against the side of the vessel, played, sang, laughed, and chaffed each other as though they had all been members of one great family,

as indeed they were—the family of those who toil from morning till night, creating the wealth that they never enjoy.

We did not stop very often, but when we did there was always a crowd awaiting us. The arrival and departure of the steamer is the event of the day, and all those who could spare a moment to speed a parting or welcome a coming guest, were there doing their duty cordially. I can see, at this moment, the village priest, leading by the hand the boy who was going away to fight for fortune in a wider sphere. He gave him a kindly blessing, smiled at him a wish for perfect luck, and turned to chat with others of his parishioners. He was a very corpulent gentleman was that village priest, but he had a reverend aspect, and I think a man in trouble could have told him all his griefs. He looked so very kind and human, his broad, red face beaming from under his soft felt hat, his great body swelling out before him in massive sphericity, that when I noticed the piece of white ribbon that encircled his all too plentiful rotundity, I could think of nothing else with which to compare it but the track that runs round the Stadium.

Then there were women washing, continental fashion, on the stones by the river side, mingling their soap and scandal in proportions that varied according as hand or tongue waxed the faster; timber barges, timber rafts, ferry boats, and the inevitable dredger that spends its whole existence digging mud. Storks, ducks, and other aquatic

or semi-aquatic birds disappeared before us into long water-lanes, where the low reeds and bushes spoke of swamps, and whispered of rheumatism and fever. The villages were small, few and far between; they were probably very dirty, for they looked so picturesque, with their grey, brown, or white stones, set off by a background of green.

We passed the mouth of the Drave, adding its contribution to the Danube collection, and not far away a ruined castle. There are not many castles in this region, for there are no passes to guard, and no valley mouths to defend, but at Peterwardein there rises an enormous fortress, at whose feet, on a peninsula formed by the river, the little town is built. In the church above is the tomb of a famous preacher of the Crusades, John Capistranus, one of the fiery zealots who stirred up that curious mixture of military and religious fervour which, for several centuries, dominated the whole of civilized Europe. Peterwardein has also a bridge of boats, much more satisfying to behold than the big railway bridge that boasts its superior strength not far away.

Late at night the boat called at Semlin, the last Hungarian town on the right bank of the Danube. The lights across the water were those of Belgrade, the capital of Servia. I was cast ashore at Semlin, but that is another story.

XX

SEMLIN

I NEVER intended to visit Semlin. I had never heard anything about it, and on a long journey from the Black Forest to the Black Sea I was not likely to waste any time upon a place that even the best of guide-books scarcely mentions. But I was cast ashore at this small Hungarian town, and had to make the best of what at first looked like a small disaster. I had gone on board at Budapest under the impression that the steamer I had invaded was bound for the mouth of the Danube. About midnight we arrived at Semlin, and it was only then that I learned that it went no further. I accosted a passenger who possessed fragments of almost every European language except English, the only one with which I profess any familiarity. With the aid of one of those useful Manuals that contain ready-made phrases in sundry tongues, I managed to secure the guidance and friendship of the gentleman to whom I have referred. He piloted me to a hotel where I was comfortably lodged and not too uncomfortably charged, taught me how to order and drink several varieties of spritzer, and left me, in the small hours of the morning, with a feeling that hospitality and

friendship are to be found under the most unlikely circumstances by those who seek aright.

I had to wait a whole day for a connexion, so there was no need to rise early in order to explore the beauties of the town at which I had been stranded. For that very reason I rose at an unearthly hour to promenade the thoroughfares of Semlin, or Zimony as it is called in Hungarian. It was well that I did so, for by eleven o'clock the heat was unbearable, and by that time the market was over. I am fond of foreign markets. They are the only places in which to see the people in anything like their natural dress and character. Their stalls are a veritable museum of all that the peasant produces and of much that the townsman wants. I give them the preference over galleries, castles, cathedrals, and all the other recognized exhibits that, in their degeneracy, form the chief attraction for the tourist. Here in Semlin the stalls were arranged under leafy trees or under big umbrellas that spread a wider shade than their verdant brethren. They were loaded with the produce of the orchard and the garden, and their varied tints were a harmony of colour that only Nature can produce. There were endless varieties of fruit, green cucumbers, red tomatoes, brown onions, fat ripe melons, and yards of healthy rope-like macaroni.

The women wore chiefly black or blue dresses, with an occasional sprinkling of red handkerchiefs around their sun-tanned, good-tempered faces. In one quarter were milk and cheese, blue

enamelled pots and pans, eggs and fish and brushes. Some of these brushes were ingeniously made of bundles of reeds, the stems fastened together with fibres, and the thinner ends spread out like a fan. The inhabitants of Semlin, not yet having had the pleasure of being spoiled by the traveller, have not yet begun to make these brushes out of worthless material to be sold as curiosities. There were loaves of bread as large as footballs, and seemingly quite as indigestible. They were certainly quite as brown and shiny. Live poultry, carried by the legs without protest at this not particularly courteous method of treatment, were as numerous as the loaves of bread. Everywhere in these regions chickens are so cheap that the economical man at a restaurant takes chicken as the least expensive dish he can get. The vendors of the poultry were a merry lot of females, who refused to let me depart before I had photographed them and the birds, had taken their addresses in writing that I cannot now read, and had promised to send them all copies of the views.

On one side of the market was the big church—a cathedral, I believe, and the seat of a Greek archbishop. In front of the building was a stall for the sale of many sizes of candles, and no one in the market was more patronized than the sellers of these articles. Inside, there was an endless procession of worshippers depositing candles on altars, saying their prayers, and giving a little of their gains to the saints who had sent them good luck.

I wandered down to the river side, to the right bank of that blue Danube that is nowhere blue except on the front page of a celebrated waltz. In the water, up to their knees, were a number of horses attached to carts that were up to their wheels. Men were busy pumping water into the barrels that were carried on the wheels. This water was for the benefit of the good people of Semlin. It is said that cholera sometimes visits this place, and there seems little reason to doubt this statement, when one considers the nature of the water supply. Dozens of children, of a ripe school age, were helping the men to fill the barrels, with that attention to any messy duty that does not concern them, so characteristic of the children of every land under the sun.

Beyond, Belgrade rose into view, the hill on which its fort stands quite conspicuous amongst the assemblage of spires and towers. But if you want to view Belgrade from the Semlin side, you must stand still to do it, for if you walk uncircumspectly there is no knowing where you will step to, or upon what you will tread. Men are fishing in the stream ; dead fish are on the path. Women are plucking poultry under the trees ; somnolent chickens are basking under the shade of their fat old mothers' wings. Fishing boats are hauled unceremoniously up the bank to the spot where you were standing before you suffered from their impact ; small children are playing round your legs, and wondering why on earth you want to interfere with their amusement. But everyone

is kind, for somehow kindness seems to flourish in sunny places. Under the eaves of the houses on the banks Indian corn is drying in bundles; we are in a land where this grain is grown in abundance, and where it is indeed the staple food. In the water men are bathing, to the disgust of the herds of pigs, that see no reason for moving off the mud in the heat of the day. On the chimney-pots, amongst a bundle of sticks that form a nest, storks that look like sticks are solemnly watching the throng below, with all that calm contemptuousness that belongs to an exalted position in life.

You may walk for a long distance along the river-side beneath lines of stately elms. Under your feet is a rough unpaved promenade, to your left are low mud flats, and in front are the houses of Belgrade, backed by the foothills of the Balkans.

Floating on the water are hundreds of boats, of which the most attractive are the big clumsy Danube barges, with their cosy accommodation for the captain of the vessel—a little cottage where he rears chickens and grows flowers, just as if he were on land. Rowing-boats, fiery screaming launches, stately steamers of small pattern lend variety and interest to the scene.

When I had had enough of the heat and the dust I went back to my hotel for lunch. Most of the natives indulged in paprika and melon, and the man who can eat more than one helping ought to live in a stable. The meal was served in the open-air, under the trees; at night the place was illuminated with coloured lights, and made merry

by the pranks of the mosquito, the same wily unresting beast wheresoever he may be found. As it is impossible to enjoy your food without music, a genuine gipsy band discourses folk tunes on guitars and zithers, and, if the mosquitoes would only cease their lively accompaniment, the result would be pleasant enough.

Later in the day, when I had been duly fortified by the national dish of peppered fowl, I went to see the castle. I always leave ruins to the last. They are so common everywhere. The ruins were hard to find because there was so little of them, but there is comfort in the fact that they can be easily and quickly seen, and the tourist conscience thereby satisfied at the least possible expenditure of time and trouble. The castle had been erected by John Hunyadi, a celebrated Hungarian, who, so far as I know, had no connexion with the famous mineral water that bears a part of his name. In the neighbourhood of the old grey walls was the most crowded assembly of mosquitoes I have ever seen, and my experience of this villain extends from the Arctic Circle to the Equator. The stems of the trees were literally one mass of them. If I had been John Hunyadi, I would not have taken the trouble to erect a castle. I would have beguiled my enemies to the shade of these trees, and detained them there under false pretences till the insect host had had their wicked will. They would have annihilated all his foes within an hour. I ventured under one tree for two seconds, received one attack, and fled.

As I went back to the hotel I saw some men making a road. The stone was brought along in big carts and tipped out, and the workmen smashed it up with small hammers where it fell. The result bore about as much resemblance to a road as did Hunyadi's ruined walls to his original fort.

Semlin is not a show place, but it has much worth seeing, if you will only look for the things that it neither hides nor parades. There are worse misfortunes than being cast ashore in a small Hungarian town.

XXI

BELGRADE

I HAVE omitted from these sketches of the Danube much mention of either Vienna or Budapest, for the simple reason that I can think of nothing to say about them except what has been much better said before. I would add, however, that I did not fall in love with Vienna; it is too new. There is no atmosphere of repose about it, and all the stone work is too clean. The most interesting thing in Vienna, to me, is the tram-ticket, a thin piece of paper about six and a half inches long, and containing a bewildering array of figures and symbols.

But if we have to leave these two well-known capitals alone, we cannot afford to mete out the same treatment to Belgrade, the chief city of Servia. I arrived there at night, after a day of rain, and my impressions were of heaps of cobbles in pools of water. The next day the impression changed to heaps of cobbles in mounds of mud. As we drove over these same uncomfortable heaps of stone, the carriage swayed this way and that, and the possibility of ever getting to one's hotel with a whole skin was one that had to be faced. It took us five minutes to reach our desti-

nation, and cost us five francs. It was worth five francs to get out of the vehicle.

On the whole, I should describe Belgrade as a dirty, miserable, squalid hole. The streets and footpaths are badly paved, and the shops, for a capital, can only be described as mean and poor. The most striking thing I saw in any shop was a number of elaborately decorated metal coffins. It seems strange that where there is so much poverty there should be so much expense in the matter of funerals. I saw women pick up rotten heads of maize in the gutters and give them to their famished little ones to chew. These people, I'll wager, don't sleep their last sleep in the gaudy coffins in the High Street.

The town aims at being imposing, and has theatres and statues and electric trams, but these are associated with a pavement that is a disgrace and sanitary arrangements that are a crime. There is a magnificent café for the rich, decked out with tiles of cream and chocolate, and a new palace that resembles a big bank. This palace stands in a main street, flush with the roadway. There is no garden front and no railing. By the side is a small garden where the old palace stood, and in which the late king and queen were brutally murdered. A glance at the faces of many of the people suggests many potential murderers, for brutality would appear as common as poverty. Perhaps I do the Servians an injustice, and I only spent a few days in the capital, but these were so many days too long for me.

One morning I went to the market, and here I forgot all my bitter thoughts, except when I looked at the faces of some of the men. But that market! I have seen nothing quite like it elsewhere. It is set, in part, amongst avenues of trees, and under the branches there is a wonderful assortment of necessaries for the use of the townsman and the peasant. There were huge gourds, tomatoes, beans, fruit, beetroot, seeds, lemons, and apples. No one cares whether the fruit be ripe or not, and cholera is a frequent visitor to the homes of many. Enough brooms and brushes were offered for sale to sweep the land from one end to the other, and, judging by the appearance of the houses I passed, brooms and brushes were about the last things a Servian holds in respect.

Rows of milk cans did not invite me, for milk must be a dangerous draught in Belgrade. Rolls with carroway seed decorations, and bilious looking loaves, tough and stodgy, were no more tempting than the milk. The fruit was wonderful; the blackberries were as big as plums, the melons as big as footballs. On the ground lay heaps of pottery, glazed and unglazed, green and brown respectively. Porters hurried to and fro, bearing little mountains on their backs; peasants jostled each other in an attire that combined the distinctive features of a waistcoat and a nightshirt. The women's boots or shoes were rolls of carpet; the men's the same. The colours of these curious garments were many, all sobered by age and toned

THE MARKET: BELGRADE.

BELGRADE · ANOTHER VIEW OF THE MARKET. [*Facing page* 182

by dirt, but, nevertheless, more pleasing to the eye than the new palace or the electric trams.

"Sunlight Savon," gave a homely touch to the scene, and reminded one of the homeland, where the same Savon was made, and more conscientiously used.

When I got out of the market, I wandered into the park, a pleasant shady place with a fountain, well planted rows of trees, and busts of famous Servians. Everybody is famous somewhere, even if it be only in a tiny village, but the money spent on the busts would have been better spent in paving and cleaning the streets. Then I went to the fortress, often besieged and taken. If ever Servia goes to war with Austria I wouldn't give much for the mouldy defences that face the river.

The best view in Belgrade, to use an Irishism, is outside it. To get to the spot in question you take a short tram ride. Three roads run parallel to each other—tram, rail, and highway—down a pretty country lane bordered with trees. The branches come low down and brush the passing tram-car, and to put one's head outside involves the risk of decapitation. Perhaps it is nobody's business to lop the branches and reduce the chances of accident. At the end of the ride I found a small church with a holiday crowd surrounding it. The building was crowded; the peasants were chanting in a reverent, solemn tone, and the priests were administering the communion wine with a tea-spoon. Children and adults passed rapidly before the officiating clergy, and the children were given a

small bunch of grapes. Outside, men were selling fruit and cakes, people were lying about on the grass, and everything betokened a holiday of some kind or other. The best clothes were all on view, and I must admit that they were an improvement on the rags of the capital, if less useful to the artist and the photographer.

Beyond the church were some really good roads and shady lanes, pleasant meadows, and glimpses of tree-clad hills that tempted one to make straight away for the interior. The air was filled with the scent of the new-mown hay, and the roadsides were brightened by gaily flowering shrubs. Within half an hour after the close of the service in the church the crowd had dispersed, chiefly into restaurants. These people had money to spend, and did not chew dirty lumps of maize out of the gutters.

At my hotel I wrote a letter, but when I asked for blotting paper they brought me sand. Sand, in these days, in a big apparently up-to-date hotel, is a fair sample of Belgrade. It is like a dirty man dressed up in soiled finery, and the finery none of the best to begin with.

THE THEATRE: BELGRADE.

AN OX CART: BELGRADE.

Facing page 184

XXII

BELGRADE TO GALATZ

Between Belgrade and Galatz there is one stretch of river scenery that is said to be unrivalled in Europe. I can well believe that the statement is true. The gorge of Kazan is worth all the trouble that it takes to get to it. The hills come down to the water's edge, white limestone shining in the sun, red and yellow sandstone burning in the heat. There are few trees, but sufficient to give, in the distance, the appearance of being well wooded. In the early morning the steep white walls throw deep cool shadows over the turbulent stream as they rise like giant walls sheer above the foaming torrent that frets their base. As the clouds pass across the face of the sun, the shadows deepen, and gloom and death hover in the hollows of the rocks. When the sun shines out again there is gold and glory in the landscape, and life and joy, even on the frowning faces of the barren rocks that keep the passage.

Ahead, the cliffs come so close together that there appears to be no opening for the vessel. A baby rivulet may get through, but what is to become of a mighty river ? Then it opens out, and stream and vessel go through with a rush that

would be perilous had the channel not been deepened, and the steersman brought up to his work from his youth.

There are a few level spaces where only a sheep might graze, and yet man has managed to raise crops in these confined areas amongst the rocky pinnacles, where the hoarse cry of the vulture is still to be heard, and the eagle goes in sweeping circles in the blue.

The railway that follows the bank is too insignificant to distress you. It is dwarfed into nothingness by the sea of rock that crowds upon it on either side. Even the dirty smoke from the funnel of the steamer changes to a pale blue as it drifts across the face of the torn, gashed masses of the cliff. Huge strata of limestone lie at an acute angle with the vertical, telling of the mighty forces that have upheaved the hills around, even as watermarks at higher levels tell of the equally mighty forces that live in the torrent and have cut this passage through what some would fondly call the impregnable hills.

It is some relief from the severe if grand austerity of this wilderness of cliff and pinnacle to come upon a broad basin where the river becomes a lake, and a little plain with red-roofed houses and a white-spired church comes down to the edge of the stream to drink. But it is only a momentary relief. Once again threatening masses of rock, piled high on precipice and summit, threaten to roll down upon the passing steamer and crush her as one cracks nuts.

Owing to the steepness of the enclosing walls of the gorge there is, for most part of the day, shadow on only one side, and then the light side laughs in the face of the sombre, and the gay and brightly lit one flaunts her merriment in the face of the seared and wrinkled visage of her neighbour.

Every winter the torrents from the high lands carve new crevices out of the walls, and send the remnants down to form tiny plains of sand and gravel at their feet. And so we rush along till finally we are through the canal at the Iron Gates, and the bare cliffs have given way to green fields and tree-clad slopes. Peace follows strife; the oasis appears in the wilderness; the rough and tumbling river becomes as peaceful and gentle as a lake. Maize and hay stand piled up in the fields; white oxen trudge lazily; brown oxen feed meditatively; blue sky with wisps and feathers makes a background for the fire of the sun; and valleys that lead away to the unknown and the mysterious offer a passage through the distant hills.

In the gorge are remains of Trajan's road in the shape of the holes that held the beams that supported the wooden galleries by means of which he carried the way round the faces of the cliffs in those places where they were too steep for even the Roman road builders to overcome them.

I put in for a night at Rustchuk, the Bulgarian river port. It pleased me about as much as Belgrade, and gave me about as high an opinion of the Bulgarians as I had gained of the Servians. True it had a cinematograph that was playing

Oliver Twist, and that might have meant that Bulgaria had some appreciation of English literature; but I have no belief in the intellect of the average frequenter of the cinema. I had a lot of trouble to get into Rustchuk. The ticket collector did not want to let me break my journey; the passport inspector wanted to find fault with the details on that tremendous document; the custom-house official threatened to open all my undeveloped films.

I had no idea where to go, so I followed one straight street till it became three streets, and then, for choice, followed the advice so often tendered to me in my early youth, and kept to the right. I stopped to peep into the bakers' shops, where the ovens were just behind the counter, and you could watch the rolls going in and out of the fiery furnace. It is easy to be sure that you get new baked bread at Rustchuk, if you like to take the trouble to wait.

I found a hotel where it was possible to get a room, but where food was not served. That had to be obtained outside. Even in the morning coffee was not obtainable, so I made my own tea and filled up the other internal gaps with some stale biscuits bought from a Mohammedan, who sold them for three times their proper price because I could not bargain with him, and who would probably have given them to me for nothing if I could, as they were mouldy with age. I got my dinner in the evening amongst a crowd of Turks and other atrocities, and listened to an

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elderly gipsy lady playing a violin and singing at the same time, and pretending to be twenty years younger than she was.

I saw all there was to be seen of the outside of Rustchuk, the enormous cemeteries where I wondered if there were as many dead as there were gravestones; a broad track that will be a very fine broad road when it is finished, and it is conceivable that they do finish things in Rustchuk at times; a beautiful public garden with clumps of bananas surrounded by beds of geraniums; a monument with a lion bearing a broken chain in its mouth.

Then the minarets called me, and I wandered off to the Turkish quarter where there were dusty lanes and cobbles, oxen, horses and donkeys, and men drawing water from wells and pouring it into disgusting barrels to be taken home for domestic consumption.

I found the Union Jack flying and the British arms stuck up on the outside of a house. Here lived the British Consul, or his equivalent, but he was a Greek who could speak no English, and so was of little use to me.

Men were washing sheep in the river, and preventing their soap from getting lost in the current by having a string fastened through the middle of the lump. The sheep apparently liked either the soap or the water, or both, for one or two who had been left behind on the hillside were bleating loudly and beseeching the bathmen to fetch them down and let them join their brethren in the yellow Danube.

Shoe-blacks called for customers but got few, and little good there would have been in wasting money on blacking. If the weather be dry, the road is ankle deep in dust; if wet, it is ankle deep in mud. In the boulevard, with its four rows of trees, a few white oxen were chewing the scanty grass. One was lying on his side, munching according to his kind, while his keeper, a white-bearded old Turk, in sloppy trousers, red sash, and red fez, peacefully slumbered with his head on the fly-covered buttocks of the beast.

I did not fancy the food at Rustchuk, and abstained from all beverages except tea. I lived on bread and biscuits, bread and chocolate, and, for a change, had bread and grapes. This is one form of the simple life; there must be others more attractive, or it would not have so many priests and prophets.

XXIII

GALATZ

Galatz is a thriving port on the Danube where hundreds of steamers from many lands gather to convey passengers and goods to the ports of the Black Sea and other places. It is not a tourist centre, and probably most of those who seek its locality only do so with the distinct intention of getting out of it at the earliest opportunity. And yet, like so many of the unvisited places of the earth, it is not without its own attractions if you are not in a hurry or in search of wild excitements.

The town proper is built on a hill, but there is an extensive suburb along the river banks where the business of the port is carried on. Here the cosmopolitan character of the place is at once apparent, for, in a few yards, you can hear half the languages of Europe spoken in a few minutes, and see types of a score of races in costumes familiar or otherwise. On alighting from the steamer you hail a carriage. Most of these have two horses and one coachman, but the single coachman is almost equal in bulk to the two animals he drives. The Jehus of Galatz wear blue velvet cloaks and broad coloured sashes. They are the best looking, best dressed men in the town,

and they weigh the most. As they crawl along the streets looking for fares they touch their hats to the pedestrians with a grace and respectfulness that almost makes you wish to ride if only to repay so much courtesy with a little of the local currency. As a rule I did not succumb to the temptation, but repaid the salutation with one which I vainly attempted to make equally courteous and which was certainly equally inexpensive.

There are few public buildings that are worth mentioning or visiting, but then public buildings are so common elsewhere that their absence occasionally comes as a relief. The main road is lined with rows of limes that give some amount of shade in the day-time and exhale a pleasant perfume in the evening when the sun is saying good-bye. There is a handsome new post-office, coloured with a creamy wash, and a new creamy-coloured church of Moorish character, with domes of glittering gold or ruddy copper. The houses on either side of the main thoroughfare are very handsome, clean, and bright, and bear everywhere an air of cheerfulness and wealth befitting the houses of a rising port.

On the outskirts of the town, with a foresight that is not often found so far East, a wide public garden has been laid out to serve as a place of recreation when the rest of the neighbouring land has been covered with houses. The lesson of town planning, if not faithfully learned and followed in this far Roumanian port, has in one respect, at any rate, been taken to heart. In the blazing

A COACHMAN: GALATZ.

A COUNTRY CART: GALATZ.

[*Facing page 192*

afternoon it is pleasant to sit by the side of the placid if artificial lake, and listen to the cool music of the fountain as it sings its silvery song to the goldfish in the basin at its feet. There are rustic summer-houses and, not to be altogether out of the running, an artificial ruin is being erected. In a few hundred years it will have gathered appropriate legends round its moss-covered walls, and will then be every whit as pleasing and satisfying as any of the genuine relics of the past that dot the banks of the Danube from one end to the other.

Some of the beds of geraniums and other garden flowers looked very thirsty in the heat, and the clumps of dark firs, sturdy and self-reliant, seemed to be making fun of the bananas that drooped under the fierce rays of the afternoon sun. There is no need to go to the Far East to get warm in the summer time. Any part of Roumania will do just as well.

On the far side of the garden there is a view over the lake of Bratish. This lake covers an area of some 100 square kilometres and is very boggy, though rich in fish. At first I mistook it for an arm of the Danube, and was delighted to find, as I thought, that at last I had seen the "Blue Danube," which everywhere else was of the colour of mud. Then I mistook it for an arm of the sea, till I realized that the sea is half a day's journey from Galatz, and finally I did the only sensible thing—I looked in the map and found it was the lake of Bratish. The edge of the garden lies along

a steep slope and looks down on low, flat meadows. The eye wanders down to the meadows over rows of vegetable gardens of no interest, to a small railway, also of no interest, then to the broad lake streaked with blue and green, and then beyond again to a line of low reddish yellow hills half hidden in a veil of mist.

On the terrace that runs along the edge of the slope there are tables and seats and all kinds of *consommations* suitable to the palates and the pockets of the Galatzian bourgeois. It is as well not to let the gaze wander to the right, to the site of the town, for there rise the factory chimneys and the smoke, the gasworks and other modern uglinesses without which modern civilization cannot progress. I would say, too, that it is unwise to look at the edge of the wooden fence that serves to prevent the unsteady from wandering down the incline. For here, as all the world over, the fence is inscribed with the names of visitors from one end to the other. Perhaps it is wrong to grudge these poor people their only chance of perpetuating their names, but what a pity it is that it should commemorate their ineffable stupidity at the same time!

The streets are the interesting feature of Galatz. The oxen were bringing great loads of heavy granite setts for the repairing of the roadway and turning aside contemptuously as the cheeky electric tramcars passed. Other oxen were pulling the long boiler-shaped water carts, by means of which the dust of the roads was laid, or the thirst

GALATZ: AN OX CART.

A STREET IN GALATZ.

[*Facing page* 194

of the dry-throated assuaged. There was more than one good-looking, well-dressed peasant girl trudging through the heat and dust on business of domestic character bent, and on all this earth the finest sight in any road is a pretty face with a cheerful smile on it. The younger the face the better, if it be of the Roumanian type.

Over on the other side of Galatz there is a purely native quarter, but, unfortunately, the houses are of that uncompromisingly ugly type that is gradually spreading through all the hot lands of the globe—low, one-storeyed, of brick or plaster; house after house exactly like its neighbour, and not one worth looking at except as an example of the degradation of native taste by the speculative builder. The roads were inches deep in dust that rolled up in clouds if a pony trotted, and became a first-rate dust-storm when a bullock waggon ran down a hill. Through the middle of these awful dust-heaped streets electric trams went whizzing with that sublime contempt of everything except their own mission that characterizes machinery and its makers. The pigs that rolled themselves in the dirt at every corner were the only inhabitants that appeared to be fitted, by their character and temperament, for their particular surroundings.

The fruit market in the centre of the town can be recommended to those in search of a feast of colour. The mingled hues of the beetroot and the shiny tomatoes, the yellows and greens of the lemons and melons, and the sober browns of the

flat rings of bread are a charm that makes one speedily forget the pigs and the dust that are lying in the heat not far away.

One thing that must strike the English traveller is the evidence of the way in which his countrymen have spread themselves and their products all over the world. It is not merely that on the wharves you can hear your own tongue at frequent intervals, but the chief hotel is the Hotel Bristol, the chief sauce in demand at the restaurants is Worcester, the greater part of the ships in the river are flying the British flag, and the most common thing on the menu is *Biftek englisch*; the piles of coal on the wharves are from Cardiff. Let it be added that *englisch* as applied to *biftek* means "underdone," so that, for all I know, there may be an undertone of sarcasm in the designation.

Food is cheap. You can get a good meal in the open air of soup, omelette, and wine for a little over a shilling. Whether it would be wise to sample "Stomachico," which figures in the list of beverages, is a question that must be left to each traveller to decide for himself.

XXIV

THE LOWER REACHES OF THE DANUBE

It is safe to say that of the thousands of tourists who sail upon the Danube in search of rest and amusement, few ever extend their journey to the mouth of the river. And yet the delta of the Danube is not without features of distinct interest, though lacking in scenic attractions.

The port of departure may be taken as Galatz, a thriving commercial town with a large shipping trade, in spite of its distance from the sea. Galatz numbers 90,000 inhabitants, including many Germans and Hungarians and other subjects of maritime nations. The town proper lies on the hill, but the suburb devoted to shipping extends along the river bank and is lined with quays. The port of Galatz is full of life, and besides sailing ships, is also frequented by the steamers of the Austrian Lloyd, the Messageries Maritime, and by British, Italian, Russian, and French vessels, in fact by shipping from all parts of the world.

Galatz is the principal station of the Danube Steamship Company, which has established numerous offices here, including that of an Inspector-General, a Ships' Surveyor, and a Harbour Master. The Company carries on a regular trade in pas-

sengers and goods to Tulcea and Sulina. Galatz is also the starting point of the service with the Black Sea ports, Odessa, Batoum, and Trebizond, carried on by the steamers of the Austrian Lloyd and the Russian Danube Steamship Company, and also with Constantinople and the Levant.

In the river lie long lines of ocean steamers, tramps, and tug-boats. Behind are the unrelieved uglinesses of gasworks and factory chimneys, while on the wharves themselves are the stacks of timber that speak of the extensive trade derived from the forests further west.

On the right bank we catch a glimpse of the beginning of the Danube delta, a broad flat plain, intersected by innumerable water-ways—a perfect wilderness of reeds. The contrast between the two banks is striking and impressive. On one side are the productive noisy activities of man, and on the other the silent and invisible activities of nature. As the little steamer swings down the stream, the wharves and factories of the modern port are left behind, and the plains of the left bank are revealed. The long lines of anchored steamers give place to lines of rafts and piles of poles, and away on the right the hills that buttress the high ground of the Balkan peninsula become visible. Another few miles and there are neither rafts nor chimneys, but hundreds of acres of Indian corn, so tall that a man could not see his way amongst it, so untidy in its appearance that a woman of strongly marked domestic tendencies might well wish to set to work with a brush and scissors.

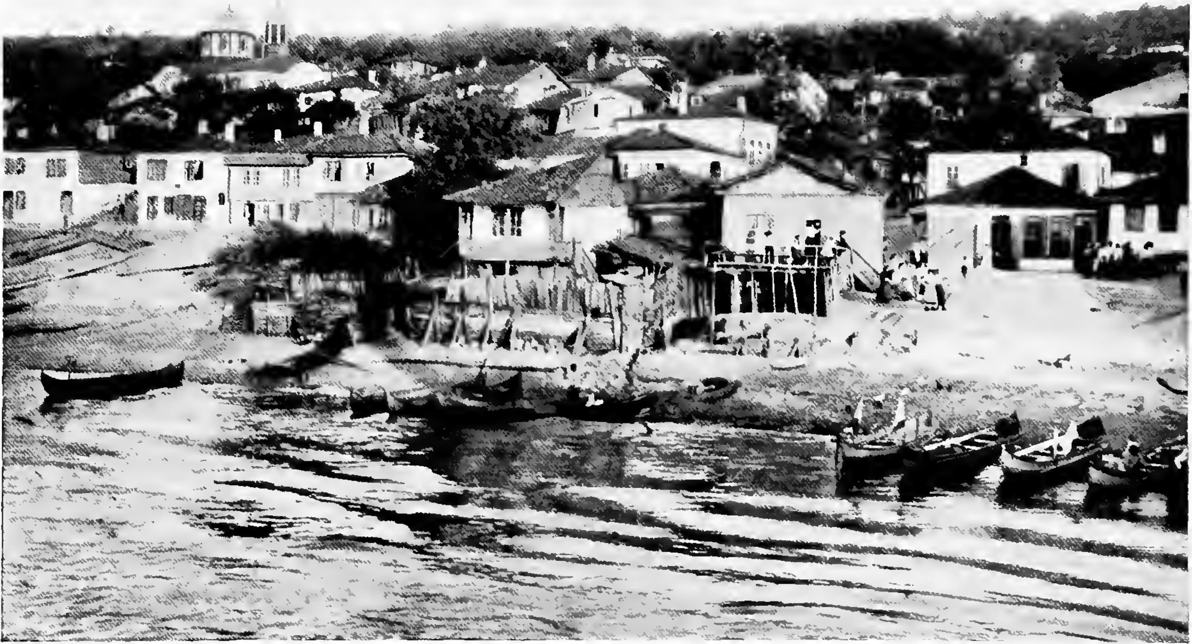
There are woody interludes that suggest a park, and then, as we sweep out into the centre of the current, the prettiness of the banks is dwarfed by the distance ; the trees disappear almost entirely, never to regain much of a footing ; the cows come down into the water to crop the tops of sundry water-loving plants and to cool their bodies, to quench their thirst, and satisfy their hunger without the fatigue of marching from point to point.

In places where the banks, if not high, are steep, steps have been cut for the use of the washerwomen who make a laundry of the river. There are many of these steps, for there are many washerwomen, whose homes, however, are not visible from the banks, shielded as they are from the impertinent gaze of the curious by the tall reeds or the taller trees. Patient oxen march round and round in weary circles as they pump the water from the river on to the low flat plains and water the fields. From the water-wheels there is a constant flood of wasted water, and half the energy of the mild-eyed creatures is ineffectively spent. Where upon the brink of the current there are low ground and grass, shepherds may be seen tending their flocks of sheep, and seemingly about as ambitious and fond of exercise as the beasts they lead.

We pass the mouth of the Pruth and the little Russian town of Reni, with its 6,000 inhabitants, and arrive at Isacea, formerly a Turkish fortress, now a small Roumanian fishing town. This is the first port of call after leaving Galatz, and here one

gets a glimpse of the East that will serve for those who have never travelled in the Orient as an introduction to some of the colour and the sunlight of more distant lands. The earth is yellow and the bare hills are yellow, but the turbans of the Turks are red. There are pink sashes, shirts, and waistbands and blue trousers, all stained and dirty, and yet whose faded hues are a pure delight. There are brown and yellow dilapidated vehicles waiting for passengers, a canteen that boasts more galvanized iron than beauty, low huts with roofs and walls of reeds, and a few tables in the shade where unhealthy liquids slake the sun-baked throats of the porters and the coachmen. It is not beautiful, not picturesque, possibly not worth going so far to see, and yet, when you are there, well worth looking at, even worth painting. There are no houses at the landing stage, for the town lies back from the river, where the ground is high enough to escape the floods that occasionally cover certain parts of the land when the water is high.

The next stop is at Tulcea, a town with 14,000 inhabitants, extensive trade, and the works of the European Danube Commission. It lies on the slopes of a hill. The houses are scattered ; a few trees have set up a claim to a right for existence ; a row of windmills flings its arms about on the top of a row of hills ; a few minarets betray the presence of the Turk ; an obelisk commemorates someone or something, I know not what, and a statue on the quay, of the ordinary conventional



TUTRAKAN.

[*Facing page* 200

ugliness, perpetuates the fame of someone, I know not who.

There are rows of little cafés with large and grandiloquent names and small accommodation. The National Café which, by its title, might aspire to refresh the world, has four chairs and one table.

Below Tulcea the river splits up into an inextricable tangle of marshes and water-ways, and the steamer enters the Sulina arm of the Danube, which has been dredged and improved, and is now accessible to vessels of a draught up to four metres. This arm has been protected by dams constructed by the Powers who are parties to the Treaty.

There are few houses in this part of the delta, and what there are are low one-storeyed structures, painted white or blue, and thatched with reeds. The fences are of reeds, the chimneys of clay. Each house or group of houses is an island in the great sea of maize that stretches everywhere as far as the eye can see. The telegraph line is the sole indication of the civilization of the West.

At last we drop anchor at Sulina, a small Roumanian town of 2,000 inhabitants, where may be met almost every nation under the sun, though the population is chiefly Greek. The great offices and works of the Danube Commission, the Quarantine station, and a few churches comprise the public buildings of Sulina. They are as featureless as is usually the case with modern public buildings. The mouth of the mighty highway possesses only the attraction of disappointment. Seventeen hundred miles away a tiny stream begins its

journey amongst picturesque surroundings—limestone rocks, rapids, forests, quaint villages; in the course of its long wanderings the rivulet becomes a river, the river almost an inland sea. On its banks are towns of wealth and importance, castles steeped in legend, stately capitals, the homes of kings and statesmen, markets where the wealth of the world is handled, historic fields where freedom has been fought for and won or lost. The whole route is strewn with memories that are inspiring to the imagination, with scenes that delight the eye. And here is the end of it all—a reedy plain, a narrow stream, and two lines of poles that lead the steamers out to sea. Truly, an ignominious ending!

There is some compensation for the lack of other interests in the international aspect of the place, the many and varied types of humanity encountered at every step and, to those with scientific minds, in the magnificent dams and harbour works of the Danube Commission. There are forests of masts and funnels, ugly but efficient grain elevators, muddy dredgers, and everywhere the British flag. England is in evidence in Sulina. One of the most prominent of the dirty dilapidated drinking shops on the quay is—

PETER THE GREEK'S PUBLIC HOUSE
English spoken. Old house at home

At one time Peter the Greek hoisted the British flag over his "old house at home," but the British consul insisted on its removal.

Sulina is chiefly a line of shops and drinking booths, a parallel line of half-paved dusty road and a row of cafés. It has the smell of the East, that indescribable odour of baked earth and steaming humanity that forms one of the most lasting impressions of the hot places of the globe. There are two or three rows of streets, each parallel to the first, and behind these there are swamps and duck ponds, with footpaths that wander round the mud when they remember, and through it when they forget. That all civilization has not been left behind is evident from the presence of a newspaper boy shouting his wares from the saddle of a bicycle; and one clean and wholesome spot, the International Hospital.

As one thinks of Sulina, the memories that will intrude themselves are of rows of dirty unshaven, unwashed Greeks and Turks, drinking and gambling outside cafés in the shade, and a disreputable rotten market, where old sacking, flung from rotten timbers, keeps the sun but not the flies from the fruit and the fish. "Peradventure there may be five righteous," and it were uncharitable to think otherwise, but, if so, the appearance of the whole place is a libel, and ought to be prosecuted.

IN ROUMANIA

XXV

GALATZ TO BUCHAREST

This is a short journey of 261 kilometres, but it takes nearly seven hours to do it, and so does not impress one as to the speed of the Roumanian State railways. The trains are corridor from end to end, and the second class is quite comfortable and clean. Each of the compartments is provided with time-tables and a map of the line. The third-class compartments have uncomfortable hard wooden seats; but are all provided with lavatory accommodation. At one end of the train is a big luggage van, without seats, in which travel peasants of the poorest class. They are the most picturesque objects on the train, and one would fain travel amongst them were it not for the fact that they wash not often, and that they will have the windows closed on the warmest days, despite the fact that they are herded together like cattle. They wear white tunics, white undercoat and trousers, and boots and stockings that would appear to be made of some kind of home-worked carpet. It is perhaps wrong to describe the garments as white. That was only their original colour.

The views from the windows of the train are

typical of Roumania, and, for all those who have no taste for vagabondage and discomfort, will possibly suffice. At the level crossings, which are numerous, women stand at attention, like soldiers, as the train goes by, but armed with a flag and not a musket. Here and there are the wells that supply both man and beast with water. They are of the type common all over the East. The water is raised from the well by means of a long lever pivoted on a high pole. The drawer of water pulls down on a series of jointed rods or a length of rope, and when the bucket is full allows the work of raising the water to be done by means of a huge lump of wood on the other end of the lever.

The most characteristic feature of the landscape is the enormous stacks of grain. I have no means of estimating their volume in cubic yards, but they are so large that it is with difficulty that one can be got to believe that sufficient grain can be grown on the plain to afford the material for such appalling bulk.

Most of the draught work is performed by oxen, who are able to move at a speed that is quite surprising to those accustomed only to the peaceful meditative ambling of the domestic cow. As they canter over the bare sun-burnt plains the dust rolls up like a sand storm in the desert, half burying the lazy who are asleep by the roadside, and who resent not in the slightest this addition of a little extra mother earth to that which they have already accumulated on their persons in the course of the passing years.

The main grain grown is Indian corn, which covers hundreds of square miles. The few cottages that stand here and there amongst their man-high stalks are all low and thatched, and as dirty as they are picturesque. The land is not so flat but that in places there are ridges of the clayey soil of which the country is composed, and these are worn into ragged ugly gullies by the torrents of rain that sometimes burst over this region. In low-lying places, where the reeds grow high, the mosquitoes sing loudly if you chance to pass their way, especially when the evening falls. Sometimes one sees a sentry in a place so deserted that one wonders what on earth he can be guarding. The train halts at little stations in the apparently deserted plains. People enter and leave the train, though where they come from or whence they go is a problem that the guard does not permit you time to solve. The speed of the train gives ample opportunity to take in everything in the view, especially as the character of the country and the objects seen do not vary for miles. It is monotonous as a show, but there is something attractive in trying to grasp the wealth that must be gathered and stored from the Roumanian plains, year by year, as the great grain harvests are reaped.

The chief drawback to complete enjoyment of one's reveries is the objection of the passengers for fresh air. In the middle of the day the heat is so great, that even with the windows open it is like sitting in a Turkish bath, and when several

fat old women insist on having the windows closed, a degree of suffocation is approached that is alarming.

One of the men in my compartment tried me in several languages without success, until he found that my knowledge of French was of some use. To my astonishment he then greeted me as a fellow-British subject. He could not speak a word of English, and he had never been in England. As far as I could guess his parents had never been there either, and yet he had a British passport, which he showed me with great glee, saying, "I am going to Bulgaria. If I show them a Roumanian passport they will treat me as they please; but when they see this, they will let me go where I choose." Evidently there is some magic in the name of England yet, despite the statements of some pessimistic critics to the effect that our prestige is dead.

The chief things at the stations are the thousands and thousands of bags of grain, the products of the threshing of the massive ricks that line the route.

XXVI

BUCHAREST

THE capital of Roumania possesses a double attraction. In the modern part it boasts itself a miniature Paris, while in the older quarter it offers to the traveller who is unable to go farther Eastwards a very good idea of the colour and character of the Orient.

Its new public buildings are works of utility and taste that would adorn any capital in the world. The Athenaeum, with its pillars and domes, is so attractive, and its gardens, where people sit and read their papers, so restful and shady, that one is tempted to linger outside and not to trouble about the works of art which it contains. The palace of the king is a little disappointing. It fronts the street, and the intervening courtyard is so small that one is inclined to regard it as a bank, or the house of some wealthy merchant, rather than the residence of a monarch.

The churches, which in all other places are apt to attract the English visitor, are here scarcely worthy of a visit, unless a lengthy stay is intended. One feature is, however, very conspicuous, and that is the external decorations. These are often in gold or in bright colours, and wall paintings,

which with us are usually confined to the interior are here to be found flaunting their saints and heroes on the outsides of the building. The dry climate is, of course, responsible for the possibility of all this external adornment. In the wetter climates of many other European lands discoloration and disfiguration would be too rapid a process to permit of their use.

The Metropolitan Church is approached through a long avenue of dignified trees, and is set, as all churches should be whenever possible, upon a hill. The church was locked but the windows were wide open, and it was possible to see all the usual apparatus of the Greek Church. The vestibule is covered with grotesquely stupid representations of Scriptural subjects, but one rapidly forgets these infantile productions in the contemplation of the picturesque surroundings—trees, residences, and flowers. The few clergy that were to be seen were all well-fed, well-clothed specimens of humanity, as befits those who serve and worship at a Metropolitan Church.

But it is not in the churches or the buildings that the visitor finds the charm of Bucharest. If his desire be for these things he would be well advised to stay his wanderings at some point farther west. It is the streets, with their wonderful mingling of Oriental and Occidental forms, and their fascinating pageant of colour and costume, that will keep you for hours, sitting at a café, without the slightest sign of fatigue.

The Englishman will probably have some feeling

THE NATIONAL BANK: BUCHAREST.

THE RIVER: BUCHAREST.

[*Facing page* 212

of national pride at the way in which the influence of his country has affected the capital. One shop after another, in the principal street of the city, bears evidence of the wide-spread recognition of the excellence of the national products and the spread of his language. One shop is "Old England," another the "Fashionable House," and another the "New House." "Old Scotland" vies with "Royal House" in its desire to empty your purse, and the most fashionable of the tailors offers you "Stoffe Engleze" in many varieties. A great deal of this may be due to the fact that the Crown Princess is English, and, in duty bound, I made my way to the Crown Prince's palace, to see the foreign home of one whose native home I had never been permitted to visit. I wandered through the open gates, undeterred by the suspicious gaze of a sentry, but was brought to a halt at an inner court-yard, where another soldier resolutely barred the passage. In a mixture of execrable French and German I explained to an official who had been summoned to interview me that I was an Englishman who had come to see where his princess lived. The most cordial welcome followed; gates were opened everywhere, a guide found, and a lengthy perambulation followed. The little cottage where the Crown Princess spends the afternoons with her children when she is at home, and where she has tea served *à l'Anglaise*, was pointed out with special pride. The gardens were scorched with the intense

August heat, and the flowers were parched and shrivelled. But, said the attendant, "It is better when the princess is here. She is *bien aimé.*" He declined my proffered gratuity with courtesy, and appeared to be only too delighted to do anything he could for one who was the countryman of his future queen.

Back I went to the fascinating streets to drink more coffee in the shade, and to wonder at the wealth of colour shown in the numerous peasant costumes. Ox-carts interrupted the progress of electric tram-cars, and buffaloes stared wonderingly at luxurious motor-cars. Men were selling milk in brass-bound wooden vessels; women were hawking sponges so big that one speculated on the size of the bath where they were used, and Luther, whose name I had always associated with ink-pots and Satanic visits, here proclaimed in many types and designs, the magic of a special variety of beer. In baskets, on stalls, in shop-windows were spread the most tempting assortments of melons, peaches, grapes and other luscious fruits. The uniforms of the military, perhaps more artistic than serviceable, lent an additional touch of splendour to the panorama, and the white, sun-lit buildings lost none of their attraction when seen through the vista of the green boulevards.

Bucharest possesses a river; it is only a few feet wide, but what it lacks in importance in the way of width it makes up in the number of bridges, for its trickle of muddy water is spanned

by no fewer than fifteen of them. The waters of the lake in the park are much more beautiful; here the banana mingles its long broad fronds with the tender sprays of the willow, and the geraniums show off their scarlet glories to the solemn palms that tower above them. In the centre of the largest lake is a beautiful café where, at evening time, one may sit at ease and listen, as fancy or inclination directs, either to the strains of an excellent band, or to the merry sound of the singing fountain as it warbles its silver melodies to the accompaniment of the whispering leaves.

And when you have seen all this you will, if you be wise, pay a visit to the Obor, where a scene of a purely Oriental character is on view. The Obor is the native market, and must be visited early in the day, as the peasants depart about noon. The oxen and the buffaloes drag their heavy sandy-coloured waggons through lanes of shops, where the fronts are open, as in the hot lands of the East, and where scarves and flags fly from the tall poles outside, as if they were the accompaniments of a fête and not of a market.

On the ground are spread rows of beautiful earthenware—dark brown, light brown, and yellow, subdued and calm besides the brilliancy of the scarves and the flags, but none the less pleasing for their restful harmonies. The garments outside the clothes shops suggest a sartorial art that knows only the use of the ruler, and the well-shaped forms

of the native vendors would appear to have been but little studied by those who were responsible for the rectangular garments that are offered for their adornment.

In the cattle market the pigs lie in somnolent heaps, their only sign of life an occasional grunt of satisfaction at the heat, a grunt that rises into a squealing protest when their owner, to facilitate rapidity of movement, swings them over his back and carries them to some prospective buyer, as a porter carries a box. One man bumped his pig into a soldier who was present, and, in a moment, he of the military promptly switched the bearer over the shoulders with his cane, without raising the slightest remonstrance.

In and out of the shining copper pans and the rolls of dirty wool that had freshly come from the sheepfolds, wandered children selling strings of enormous onions, or women with baskets of delicious fruit slung from a pole carried across the shoulder. The heat of the sun brought out of the fruit and the clothes' shops a wonderful assortment of odours, but nowhere were there at all apparent any of those disgusting smells that make a journey through the markets of Siam or China so disastrous to one's olfactory apparatus.

The most prominent object offered for sale to those still young enough to seek for sweetmeats, was a kind of all too solid bar, suggesting a mixture of granitic toffee and hardened mud. Ice-cream was not one whit more inviting, but the stalks of maize were a revelation as to size and

sweetness. Amidst all this astonishing display of colour and industry, there was everywhere apparent the most intense poverty. I saw people pick up maize stalks that others had cast in the gutter, and gnaw them with their teeth to satisfy the insistent demands of hunger. The men and women seemed as much in need of a hearty meal as of a hearty wash.

There are no seats for the visitor to the Obor, so when you are sufficiently tired you will return to the Parisian Bucharest to eat and drink in the open air, but not to get away from the charm of this little capital. The rows of tables with their snow-white cloths invite the hungry and the thirsty, and no sooner have you taken your seat than you are greeted by men selling walnut kernels and salted monkey nuts, which they ladle out to you with their grimy hands; men selling papers, comic and serious, the comic being often much more melancholy than the serious. One individual passes you in an astrakhan cap, embroidered waistcoat, and a white tunic, and looks longingly at the tasty dishes that are placed before you by a waiter in the orthodox black and white livery of his clan.

There are few places so near to England that offer to the traveller so many contrasts, or so much of the charm of the Far East.

XXVII

ON SPEECH WITHOUT LANGUAGE

It has been my good fortune to travel in many parts of the world. I have rolled through the jungle in a buffalo cart, swung along a Chinese street in a sedan chair, trifled with French in various parts of that delightful country, traversed Holland in a canal barge, and have performed sundry other equally meritorious journeys. When I once came back from a trip in the far north of Finland, my friends asked me, as they invariably do, " How did you get on with the language ? " To be quite truthful—a difficult matter for a traveller giving advice or relating adventures—I didn't get on with it at all. I certainly bought a grammar; my conscience bade me do that. Then I left it practically alone; my sense of pleasure bade me do that. My life, in fact, has been one long struggle between my sense of duty and my sense of pleasure. Sometimes the latter wins. There was, however, some excuse for me in this case.

I found that the Finnish language had fifteen case endings to the noun in the singular and another fifteen in the plural. There were all kinds of other unheard of verbal intricacies, so that a

cursory investigation of the little volume left me with the impression that all the difficulties of all the languages had been concentrated into Finnish in order to prevent any casual visitor to the country understanding any remarks that the natives might offer to each other concerning their affairs or his appearance. I respected their unexpressed desire that their language should be left alone, and left it. When I remember what the French language had suffered in my mouth, I resolved never to do such things again. Only the illimitable politeness of the French people has so far preserved me intact.

The man who is unable to converse with the people amongst whom he is temporarily dwelling is temporarily deprived of two of his senses—speech and hearing. To all intents and purposes he is deaf and dumb, a good thing where anglers or golfers do congregate, but embarrassing in a foreign restaurant. I realized this deprivation of my senses very acutely once when I was landed in a district where, for three days, I was unable to say or hear a single word that possessed any value as a means of communication. My vocal organs literally ached for want of exercise, and I went out into the forest, sat down on a log, and talked to myself. The language I used with reference to my study of the vernacular was explicit and explosive, but somewhat lacking in delicacy and refinement.

To the traveller who cannot speak the foreign tongues and has no interpreter, there is left

nothing but the language of signs. What these are capable of accomplishing to those trained in their use I have already shown in my account of my intercourse with the hotel porter at Sortavala. But to be able to carry on a successful conversation in the way there indicated requires practice. Now as the English are great travellers, and bad linguists, I propose to indicate, very briefly, a few of the methods of speaking without language.

To obtain a sole at a Restaurant.—Draw a picture of the sole. Some accuracy of draughtsmanship is requisite, or valuable time will be wasted in interpreting your hieroglyphics, much time lost in catching the creature, and in the end you may get dogfish.

To buy Stamps.—Print the name of the town or country on the envelope in large letters. Put the letter on the counter, looking at the same time as helpless as possible, and do not be violently disconcerted by the inane titter of the female dispenser of stamps.

To buy Matches.—Enter the shop carefully. Stand a long way from the counter and perform the action of striking. This needs to be executed with discretion, and due attention to the physique of the vendor and the position of the exits, as unexpected results have been known to follow too free and literal an interpretation of the above simple instructions.

To buy a Railway Ticket.—Write the name of your destination on a piece of paper. Hand this through the window with the right hand, and

hold up one, two, or three fingers of the left hand to denote the class. There is a little ambiguity about the demand, as three fingers may mean three first-class tickets or one third-class one. In case of error, gesticulate wildly, get in a temper, and use violent language until the error is rectified, or someone is removed by the police.

Permission to enter a Building.—Enter, and take the consequences. Exceptions to this rule may be made in the case of lunatic asylums.

To obtain Paper at a Hotel.—Sit at a table. Summon a waiter and pretend to scribble. "Visitors are requested not to tear the cloth."

As a general rule, use other people's knowledge, and keep a phrase-book handy. Never try to pronounce the sentences. Merely point to them, and insist on the person whom you are addressing picking out the proper replies instead of talking. This lengthens the process, gives you time to collect your thoughts, and prevents your being overwhelmed by the garrulity of the waiter or other species of aborigine, all of whom, as the travelling Englishman knows, "talk so fast."

SOMEWHERES EAST OF SUEZ

XXVIII

GUARDIAN DEMONS

THE dwellers in Western lands are familiar enough with the idea of "guardian angels," who cherish and control their several charges.

In Eastern lands, while guardian angels are credited with the performance of similar functions, demons are also deemed efficient servants for purposes of protection. The Oriental has a firm belief in the presence of innumerable spirits of evil disposition, who ceaselessly endeavour to interfere maliciously in his private affairs.

Thus the Chinaman's matin song is a vigorous cracker explosion, that drives away with fire and smoke those malign beings that he has unwittingly and unwillingly harboured during the dark hours of the night.

So, too, in Siam, on New Year's Eve, the natives fire guns and crackers at various points around the city walls, to clear their homesteads of those undesirable visitors that have entered by stealth during the preceding twelve months. All places and all people can be protected by various devices, such as charms, images, and sacred cords.

The palace of the King of Siam, in my time, was girdled by a holy rope, which had been blessed

by the priests, and which formed an effective barrier against the various supernatural enemies, whose special prey was royalty and his multitudinous offspring.

Now the holiest places are the most subject to the visitations of evil spirits, and therefore the worshippers at the different temples take all possible precautions to guard the sacred buildings from their attack. This is accomplished in the first place, by marking out a rectangular boundary, upon which, at the chief points of the compass, are erected small stone structures, which are solemnly consecrated, and underneath which relics are buried. In this way the boundary is rendered impassable to all wouldbe immigrants from the land of the demons.

But, in order to render the temple grounds still more spirit-proof, gigantic figures of demons are erected at the gateways of the chief temples, possibly on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief, for it may reasonably be supposed that the most effective opponents of a fiendish host will be those who know, by birth and education, their manifold wiles and stratagems.

Opposite the King of Siam's palace, on the western bank of the river, stands a temple known as Wat Chang, or "The Temple of the Dawn." The wardens are two gigantic stone figures, who are respectively man and wife, though I was never able to find out which was which. They give an excellent idea of the Siamese conception of demons,

and masks in imitation of their heads are worn by those actresses who personate legendary demons in the plays at the native theatre.

The largest temple in the capital of Siam abounds in demon doorkeepers. This temple is called Wat Poh—the word "wat" indicating not merely the church or temple, but all the attendant structures, such as houses for the priests, schools, relic mounds, and shrines.

The majority of the figures referred to, whether bare-headed, helmeted, or crowned with chimney-pot hats, are undoubtedly of Chinese origin. Some of them are in mandarin costume, the head of the dragon being a conspicuous feature in the design.

The long, wisp-like beard, which so few Chinamen can rear, but which is carefully cherished whenever it can be induced to grow, is given to many of these curious figures. The enterprising sculptor has, however, in several instances, departed from the conventional type, and has endeavoured to import a few Western friends to keep company with the Eastern ones. These he has arrayed according to his idea of Occidental costume, producing a fairly incongruous result, as a chimney-pot hat and a lady's jacket hardly match either one another, or the Chinese shoes and semi-shirtlike appendage that drapes the lower part of the body. All these figures, be they of Chinese or Siamese origin, bear a staff or wand in their hands, the universal symbol of the beadle's office.

Inside the portal guarded by these fantastic

creations are always to be found a number of pagodas shaped after a common pattern. They may be square or round at the base, but they always taper to a point at a considerable distance from the ground. They are relic mounds, and cover real, or more frequently spurious relics. They are often gilded, or inlaid with coloured tiles, or they are merely whitewashed. In either case they present a striking appearance in the dazzling sunlight.

It will be seen that the figures at Wat Chang have hats of the same pattern. Many doorways, too, are crowned in a similar way. And it may be noticed in passing that the King of Siam's crown and the religious processional hats of the Brahmin priests are of the same shape.

The idea of setting demons to guard these holy symbols and the sacred buildings themselves is not confined to one Eastern nation or country. Visitors to Canton are speedily introduced by native guides to a number of these horrible sentinels. In Longevity Lane stands the Temple of Longevity, over three hundred years old. It contains three gilded images of the Buddha, and a seven-storeyed gilded pagoda, enclosing seventy-nine images of the same person.

In a third shrine reposes a colossal image of the Buddha of Longevity, who, to judge by his fat and jovial appearance, has found a long life well worth the living. This motley collection of holy images and shrines is approached through a high square archway, at the sides of which sit two

SIAM. GUARDIAN DEMONS

[Facing page 228

frightful images, whose special care it is to guard the entrances to the merry Buddha.

Near at hand is the Flowery Forest Temple, or Temple of Five Hundred Genii, founded over thirteen hundred years ago. Here the demons have given place to three Buddhas externally, while inside, an image of the Emperor Kien-lung, who reigned from 1736 to 1796, presides over the stony assembly. Five hundred disciples of Buddha sit facing each other on elevated platforms, through numerous long corridors. And among them all sits Marco Polo, who, in all his wanderings, doubtless never thought to find so strange a resting place.

To this temple come the rich to appeal to the idols it contains, and to it come all classes to worship the image of the Goddess of Maternity, whose benevolent face, as it beams down upon the three children who scramble over her corpulent body, seems to promise to the faithful a continual increase in the family circle.

XXIX

CANTON

THE progressive commercial enterprise of the Briton is strikingly seen in the development of the once bare island of Hong Kong. To an equal degree is the intense conservatism of the Chinese exhibited in the almost neighbouring city of Canton, the chief city of the southern part of the great Celestial Empire. There are Europeans at Canton, but they live in a settlement outside the native city. Their influence, like their place of abode, is merely upon the outermost edge of the community. Gun-boats and shells, have at intervals, disturbed the equanimity of the mandarin rulers, but have never for one instant changed in the slightest degree the practices, customs, and beliefs of the native people. The fear of more shells and more gun-boats keeps the inhabitants of the mighty, overcrowded hive upon their good behaviour, but at heart they resent to this day the presence of strangers amongst them, as fiercely as ever did their forefathers in the days when they foolishly tried to put a stop to foreign intercourse by assassination and fire. The foreign visitor to native quarters is still greeted by the children with the cry of " foreign devil," and in many unpleas-

ant ways is reminded that he is an unwelcome intruder.

Our ideals of civilization have not touched the mass of the Chinese. The people are as they have been for centuries past. They sneer at our institutions, and consider themselves as in all respects superior to the white barbarian.

Casual visitors to the crowded city visit the various points of interest by means of sedan chairs. They are accompanied by a native guide, who conscientiously goes through a long catalogue of things, wonderful or horrible, in English which is fluently spoken, but imperfectly understood by those to whom it is addressed. The guide is very attentive to those in his care, very polite in his manners, and often possessed of a fair sense of humour.

It is said that the late Admiral Freemantle once visited Canton with several ladies. When the steamer anchored off the city, the guides, as is their custom, boarded her at once. The Admiral and his friends chose their guide, and prepared to follow him. The Admiral was about to descend the ladder and get into a native sampan, when the guide gently pushed him back, saying:

"Ladies first."

"Oh, that doesn't matter," said the Admiral, "I'm an old man."

"Ole man!" quickly responded the Chinaman; "ole man all more ought to know muchee better."

The streets of the city are built of a pattern that has known little variation for many centuries.

None of them are more than ten feet wide. The houses lean inwards from the base, and almost meet overhead, shutting out all but the narrowest strip of daylight. Sign-boards are hung perpendicularly outside every house. They are elaborately carved and gaily decorated with abundance of gold leaf and black or scarlet lacquer. The mystic symbols inform the curious that one particular shop is "Prospered by Heaven"; another has "Never ending Good Luck"; while another is the "Market of Golden Profits"—the said profits, be it known, going into the pockets of the proprietor.

The names of the streets are frequently poetical or fanciful. In that of "Everlasting Love," look out for the love of gain; in that of "Ten Thousandfold Peace," beware of attacks upon your credulity or your purse. The street of "A Thousand Beatitudes" does not prepossess you favourably, either as to the moral value or beauty of the aforesaid beatitudes. "The Saluting Dragon" is on the look-out for strangers. "The Dragon in Repose" vies with the "Ascending Dragon" in curious sights and defective morality, while the "Street of Refreshing Breezes" is particularly noticeable on account of its lack of all title to its beautiful designation. The reverence paid to ancestors and the love of numerous descendants, both so characteristic of this Celestial race, are probably responsible for the names of the crowded avenues, "The Street of One Hundred Grandfathers," and "The Street of One Thousand Grandsons."

Amongst the most interesting sights of this unchangeable city are the pawnshops. They are often great square, solid, granite structures, which look more like old Border keeps than the residences of accommodating uncles. The pawnshop fulfils a double purpose. It advances money at rates varying from twenty to thirty-six per cent., and it stores in safety, within its massive walls, those articles of finery and adornment that are only wanted at special times and seasons. On the flat roofs of these citadels are piles of stones and jars of vitriol, ready to repel any attack that may be made by thieves, whose methods of plunder are less refined than those of the pawnbrokers.

In the jade-stone market we met with the Chinese parallel to the western diamond. The best stones are very valuable, and are brought from Turkestan, the only place in the world where mines of this stone are worked. Every well-to-do Chinaman wears a ring, brooch, or bracelet of jade, and the poor, who are unable to purchase the real article, wear ornaments of glass, which are coloured in imitation of the more expensive stone.

Shaggy dogs, with coal black tongues, are disposed of in another market.

Fried rat, and boiled frog, not to mention fricasseed puppy, tempt the hungry into the native restaurants.

The local medicine man, adhering to the prescriptions of his ancestors, makes pills and potions, of which the chief ingredients are wax, deer

horns, petrified bones, petrified crabs, snakes, scales of the armadillo, the bones of tigers, and lime. When the medicines do not cure they kill, and whether the patient lives or dies, he does so knowing that at any rate no hated foreigner has had anything to do with the strength or quality of his medical diet.

Some elementary notions of measuring time are seen in the Temple Tower. Candles that burn at uniform rates mark in lessening inches the flight of the hours, and, intentionally or otherwise, symbolize in the dying of the flame the hourly passing of some soul to rest. There is also a water-clock, composed of four copper buckets. Slowly, drop by drop, the water passes from one to the other. In the lowest one a float carries a rod that indicates the time. When a full hour has passed away, the watchman places outside the tower a big white board, on which is painted in large black characters the time of day. Every twelve hours the water is transferred from the lower to the upper bucket, and once in three months a fresh supply is allowed.

Round the original city of Canton lies a high stone wall, from which the outer and larger city of later growth can be viewed. A few low hills, solitary and bare, are honeycombed with graves, where are buried many generations of those whose lives have been passed in this city.

The temples that are shown to the traveller are very numerous, but, except in a few instances, they are extremely uninteresting, and one pays to

enter and to leave with a monotonous regularity that is not calculated to stimulate any excessive outburst of religious sentiment. There is the Temple of the Five Hundred Genii, described in the last chapter. In the Temple of Cho Sing is a porcelain vase filled with holy water that is sold in large quantities for the healing of the sick. The transaction is profitable to the priests if not to the devout.

Just outside the Temple of the Five Hundred Genii is an arched passage about twenty feet high. In the centre of the arch is a square opening in which hangs a huge bell, said to weigh four and a half tons. Local superstition asserts that whenever this bell is sounded trouble falls upon the city. In one instance the superstition has been remarkably verified, for in 1857, when the city was bombarded, one of the first shells to fall struck the ponderous bell and knocked a big piece out of its side. Within the temple there are five large stones which represent five rams. You can make out the resemblance if your imagination is sufficiently alert, but it requires an effort. The legend runs that once upon a time five genii came to Canton, riding through the air on five rams. With them they brought five grains, symbolical of the prosperity of the city. On arriving at their destination they forsook their steeds, which were at once turned into stone. The identical petrified rams are now on view at a moderate charge.

The Temple of Horrors may be visited by the nervous without any fear of subsequent night-

mare. To the Western eye the exhibition is simply ridiculous. To the Western mind it may prove revolting. Round the sides of the principal courtyard are placed a series of carved and painted tableaux, representing the terrible tortures inflicted upon the lost in the different Buddhist hells. The models are so curiously made and placed, that they call forth only smiles,though had they been executed with any approach to realism, a more revolting spectacle could scarcely have been conceived. In front of the horrors sit fortune-tellers, gamblers, dentists, pastry-cooks, quacks and pedlars, all busily engaged in attending to the worldly wants of the worshippers. The dealers in incense sticks and prayer papers do a roaring trade.

Those who are fond of uninviting spectacles make their way to the execution ground. This is surrounded by shops where pottery is made. When not required for executions the ground is used for drying pottery. Unfortunately, it is only too frequently occupied by the officers responsible for the administration of the death penalty. Ten to twenty criminals often meet their terrible fate at the same time. The average number of executions is three hundred each year. In 1855, no fewer than fifty thousand rebels were beheaded on this ground. The wooden crosses that lean against the walls are used in the execution of females and criminals of the worst type. The offenders are first fastened to the crosses and then cut in pieces. If not so executed they are strangled.

One instance of modern innovation is seen in the Mint, which is the largest in the world. The machinery was erected by a Birmingham firm, and can turn out two million pieces of cash per day. It takes ten pieces of cash to make one cent, and there are therefore one thousand to the dollar. Those who are fond of arithmetic can find from the newspaper the rate of exchange for the dollar and calculate the value of the possible output of the Canton mint. It is a task too difficult for me. It will be discovered at the same time that a sovereign's worth of cash is scarcely a portable form of pocket money.

The Pearl River, on which Canton stands, is crowded throughout the entire length of the city, on both sides, with a compact line of boats of many sizes. In these live thousands of people who have never had a home on shore, but who, like their forefathers, have spent the whole of their lives upon the water. Each boat has its own buoy, and no one of the three hundred thousand who live in these navigable homes has any difficulty in finding his own residence.

In the chief streets one occasionally notices a few English words upon the signboards of enterprizing shopkeepers. It is to be hoped that the wares offered for sale are of better quality than the language which calls attention to them, or one would hesitate to enter the house of the " Dealer in tailor and draper. Manila cigar. All kind, of silk handkerchief, outfitter," or to eat in the restaurant of the man who " Always has any

French France pastry, Dinner, Lunch, Supper, All kinds of foreigner's cakes For Sale!" But the inquisitive may desire to penetrate to the interior of the residence of that modest Celestial whose signboard bears only the words:

A Chan. UPSTAIRS.

XXX

MACAO

MACAO is one of the most interesting and at the same time one of the most disappointing places in the Far East. To the man who merely gazes upon the sunlit waters of the beautiful bay and the blue islands veiled in the mist of distance, it is as fair a spot as eye could wish to dwell upon. To him who knows the history of the settlement, the beauties of the outlook are forgotten in the recollection of its shameful past.

Sir John Bowring, with pardonable exaggeration, has written :

> "Gem of the orient earth and open sea,
> Macao! that in thy lap and on thy breast
> Hast gathered beauties all the loveliest
> Which the sun smiles on in his majesty."

Macao is built upon the slopes of a hill that rises between two and three hundred feet above the level of the sea. From the Hotel Boa Vista, built upon a slight eminence on a horn of the crescent bay, one beholds the open estuary of the Canton river, dotted with a thousand islets. The intense blue of the waters, the deep green foliage of the nearer islands, and the purple of the distant hills, all combine to render Macao " a gem of earth and sea."

There is little worth visiting in the modern part of the settlement. All that it has to show is speedily and wearily seen. But the history of Portuguese enterprise in the East would form many interesting volumes if related with proper detail. It is a history whose early pages tell of great bravery and fortitude in the face of many disasters, but whose later chapters chronicle events that are a sheer disgrace to the nation that owns the colony.

Vasco da Gama, adventurer and explorer, rounded the Cape, sought out new lands, and handed to his sovereign the greater portion of the coast of India. As wealth from this treasure-house poured into the Portuguese coffers, the rulers of the homeland and the settlers on the distant shores cast their eyes still further east to see if there were not other mines of plenty upon which they could lay their hands. It was not long before a portion of their fleet carried Pires, an ambassador of the King of Portugal, to negotiate a treaty of commerce with China. He landed at Canton, where he received a very friendly welcome. Encouraged by the heartiness of the reception that was accorded to him by the mandarins of Canton, he proceeded to Peking to try his powers of persuasion upon the Emperor of China. But before he arrived at the capital, the Sultan of Malacca, whose country had been seized by the Portuguese, gained an audience with the "Lord of the Vermilion Pencil," and begged for his assistance. The consequence was that Pires had

to leave Peking without having been able to exchange one word with the monarch he had come so far to see. Later on, both he and his suite were murdered at Canton, and the Portuguese revenged the death of their ambassador by sending another portion of their fleet to attack the city where the murder had been perpetrated. This they accomplished with considerable success, destroying a large number of the native junks, and killing hundreds of the inhabitants.

For the next forty years these gallant adventurers experienced a series of misfortunes that might well have daunted their spirits and put an end to their desire for commercial enterprise. Time after time they formed new colonies, engaged in trade, erected forts, made roads, and then fell victims in a general massacre, organized and carried out by overwhelming numbers of Chinese. After every successive disaster they returned to their work with renewed energy and vigour, setting before their countrymen examples of courage and patience which they have been ill advised to forget.

About three hundred years ago, the reigning Emperor of China gave the Portuguese permission to settle on a small peninsula south of Canton, and here was founded the city of Macao. Until some sixty or seventy years ago, they paid to the Emperor tribute to the amount of five hundred taels a year, but a certain governor at last refused to send either gift or tribute, as he took upon himself to deny all rights of overlordship on the part

of China. A year later he was barbarously murdered by an agent of those whose authority he had defied.

The earlier governors of Macao were the senior captains of Portuguese vessels trading in Chinese waters.

Their administration was a successful one, and in thirty years the population grew to nearly twenty thousand. At that time Macao was called "The City of the Holy Name of God," and even at the present day it is frequently referred to as the "Holy City." With the rise of Hong-Kong, however, began the decline and fall of Macao. Each year has seen it one step nearer ruin, and it cannot easily reach a lower level than it occupies at the present time without suffering complete extinction as a European settlement.[1]

A long series of military rulers, either ignorant of or indifferent to the conditions under which commerce best flourishes, has brought about the existing state of affairs. Instead of trying to help the colony to maintain its position as a trading centre, they did all they could, by heavy taxes and extortionate dock and custom dues, to drive away the trade that was their wealth. The neighbouring port of Hong-Kong, under the fostering care of British rulers and merchants, has gradually attracted to itself all the former commercial prosperity of the more ancient settlement.

When trade declined, the military rulers cast about for some means of replenishing their im-

[1] This was written about 1899.

poverished exchequer. It is this later series of attempts to fill the local treasury by dishonest means that stands out in such striking contrast to the gallant efforts of the early adventurers.

The Chinese have been the victims in every case, and perhaps the officials who administer the colony think that they are but justly retaliating upon the race that plundered and slew their ancestors. Amongst the earliest of their nefarious enterprises was a kind of slave trade. Chinese coolies were entrapped or deluded, and then exported to foreign lands, there to engage in labour of such a nature, and at such a wage, that no free man would undertake it. Promises of present gain and future fortune were the baits that were held out to the credulous heathen. Iron-barred barracks and various forms of forcible persuasion were the means employed to prevent the escape and return of those who grew suspicious or discontented. The poor wretches were shipped in thousands to places like the guano islands of Chincha, there to perish. In a few instances, "emigrants" did return, broken in health and spirits, only, however, to die mere wrecks of their former selves in the land of their fathers. For some time this trade in coolies was fairly general along the Chinese coast, but when the iniquitous nature of the traffic was understood and exposed, all ports under the British or Chinese flags closed their gates against the dealers in human flesh. Macao saw her opportunity, and opened wide her arms to the slave traders. Chinese were shut up

in the town by hundreds until they could be forcibly exported to foreign lands. Half a million of them passed through Macao on their short journey to ruin and death. The descendants of old Portuguese families grew rich upon the profits of numerous transactions, and the city regained its former appearance of affluence. "The Holy City" had become a gilded hell. Chinese legislation, supported by the powerful voice of public opinion at home and abroad, put an end to the traffic, but many disastrous results remained behind.

The next move was to utilize the position of the port as a convenient centre for contraband traffic in opium. The Chinese, by means of their Customs Service, soon put an end to this source of profit for the ever-declining city.

Macao next figures in modern history as the home of a great lottery. The most casual student of Chinese customs knows that all official positions in China were won, in the first instance, as the result of a series of competitive examinations. Peking was annually the scene of the most largely attended examination in the world, thousands of students presenting themselves to undergo the trying ordeal. The greatest excitement prevailed throughout the land as to who would be head of the list.

Quite half of the entire population were willing to lay wagers upon this literary Derby. Such gambling was, for many years, forbidden by the Imperial authority. Again the "Holy City" saw

its chance. It instituted a gigantic lottery, and farmed it out to an enterprising Chinaman, who paid annually nearly half a million dollars to the government of Macao for the monopoly. For years the Chinese endeavoured to put down all such forms of speculation within their own borders, but they were practically powerless against the Portuguese, whose lottery tickets found their way all over China. In a spirit of retaliation, they legalized the lottery in their own country. Tickets could be bought anywhere, and Macao became only one amongst hundreds of places where bets could be made. It lost its monopoly, and its annual revenue from this source sank to a few thousand dollars.

The people turned once more to trade, but trade of an illegitimate character. They devoted their peculiar genius to the manufacture and disposal of " lie " tea. The English Vice-Consul at Macao reported to the British Government: " This term sufficiently explains its quality, for there is no doubt that the mixture could only be called tea in its correct acceptation through a considerable sacrifice of truth. These teas are manufactured from exhausted tea leaves, which are dried, re-fired, mixed with a certain proportion of genuine tea, and of seeds and dust. Most of the preparation proceeds to Hamburg, where no Adulteration Act is in force; but a good deal of mystery enshrouds its ultimate fate, for there are various versions as to its disposal, some parties averring that it is consumed by the lower classes, others that

it is sold to ships, and others that a quantity of it probably leaks into England as well. From what I can gather, some of this 'lie' tea is often packed in chests, labelled 'Best Congou,' and shipped to India for the lower classes. But tastes differ, just as tea sent to France and the Continent generally is a mere conglomeration of stalks and twigs, and to all appearance no tea at all."

It may be easily guessed that the revenue obtainable from such a fraud was never of the most princely character.

Nowadays, Macao exists by means of its gambling houses, which are open from hour to hour, and from day to day the whole year round. The Chinese, who control the monopoly, pay 150,000 dollars a year to the local authorities. Everyone gambles. Merchants and clerks go down from Hong-Kong on Saturdays and Sundays; the local residents try their luck with daily persistency; and every native living in or passing through the port visits one of the numerous gambling houses as soon as he has a cent to stake. The chief game played is called "fantan." It is a common game all over the East, and is purely one of chance. A square mat or board is placed on a table. Its sides are numbered one, two, three, and four. The players place their money opposite one of the sides or one of the corners. The dealer takes up a heap of cowries with both hands and counts them out into sets of four. The last group of cowries left will contain, of course, one, two, three, or four of them. The number thus re-

maining is the winning number. Suppose the gambler has placed five dollars opposite the side numbered three. If there are three counters remaining in the last group he receives fifteen dollars, less eight per cent. deducted for the bank. If he places five dollars opposite the corner between the sides numbered three and four, he will win if either three or four counters remain. In this case, however, he will receive only five dollars, from which, as usual, the bank will deduct eight per cent.

Should Macao ever lose this source of revenue it will be interesting to notice in which direction she will turn to replenish her loss.

There is in Macao one spot, the "Garden of Camoens," that has to be visited by the conscientious pilgrim, not on account of its beauty but on account of the memories thus revived of the poet patriot of Portugal, who spent many years here in semi-exile.

Camoens fought against the Moors in Africa, and took part in an expedition to the East Indies. In both places he won deserved fame. Some time later he wrote a satire on the Viceroy of Goa, and this offended the authorities and procured his banishment to Macao. In this distant land he composed the *Lusiad*, in which he sang the glories and the conquests of his native country. When he returned to Lisbon he took the manuscript with him. On the way home he suffered shipwreck, but he fortunately managed to save both himself and his poem. It was published during

his lifetime, but its success was not sufficient to prevent him, poet, general, and patriot, from dying in a charitable institution.

In the midst of the garden that bears his name is a large granite boulder with a wide, natural cleft in the middle. Over the opening is another boulder. This natural arbour is called the Grotto of Camoens, and is supposed to be the place where he actually composed the greater part of his famous poem.

The cathedral is worth a visit during Sunday morning service. The words of the priests are inaudible as they are drowned by the combined strains of a military band and a powerful organ, which play incessantly the whole time. As the regiment marches into the cathedral it presents a very curious appearance. Such a motley collection of nationalities is rarely seen in one regiment. There are pure Portuguese, half-castes of semi-Chinese or other Asiatic origin, a few Chinese, and a few woolly-headed thick-lipped negro-looking specimens from the island of Timor.

The forts that guard the place are said to be worthless for purposes of defence, and could easily be destroyed by a few shells from modern guns.

The people look poor and dirty, and are reputed poor and lazy. A well-to-do Chinaman is socially superior to a Portuguese. It is asserted that when any male member of a Macao family thinks of taking a bath, he asks his employer for three weeks' holiday. During the first week he considers and reconsiders his worthy determination to wash

himself, and makes elaborate preparations for his annual ablutions. During the second week he completes his deliberations and takes the final plunge. He spends the third week in recovering from the effects of this unusual variation in his life's routine.

XXXI

SCENES IN EASTERN PORTS

THE traveller who has sojourned long in the East becomes accustomed to the queer sights and sounds round him, and is apt to forget the feelings with which he first beheld the sunlit Orient. Soon after bidding farewell to the coasts of Europe he arrives at the shores of Egypt, there to be greeted with curious sights, sounds, and odours, that evoke mingled feelings of wonder or disgust, according to the strength of his insular prejudices.

As we approach the land of the Pharaohs the sea changes in colour from deep blue to pale green. All along the coast, outside the ancient city of Alexandria, are rows of windmills standing out black against the unclouded sky, and backed by low ridges of dazzling sand. Scarcely has the screw of the steamer ceased to revolve, and the anchor been let down to grapple the bed of the ocean, than we are surrounded by a small fleet of native craft. The boats lie close up alongside the vessels, and then someone in each boat hooks a long pole to the side of the ship and climbs up it with the skill and rapidity of a monkey. Up come the rest of the crews, one after the other, scrambling, scuffling, as they ascend the pole. They are

dressed in long robes of every conceivable colour, white, green, blue, scarlet, orange, and vermilion; their faces are as black as night, and their teeth are as white as snow. They haul up with a line baskets full of real Egyptian curios—made in Birmingham or Germany—and try to sell you, for ten shillings, a tin bracelet or an imitation coral necklace that in the land of their origin would have been dear at ten farthings. They bawl, scramble, and shout, till the babel of yelling, screaming, boisterous, inharmonious sounds bids fair to deafen you. To escape the tumult you propose going ashore. Instantly the boatmen lay hold of you with their long black, greasy fingers, poke their faces so close to your own that you think they are going to kiss you, and you recoil like a rocket. They drag the unwary down the ladder and push them into the boats.

"Come wid me, sir," says one of them. "My number, 87; I am Abraham Johnson. Two francs to go and come back. I take you ebery-where; I show you eberyting. Abraham Johnson, 87. Two francs to go and come back."

Up comes another swarthy individual, in a scarlet robe, a green waistcoat, and a yellow sash, who puts his mouth to your ear and whispers impressively, "I am Moses. Follow me."

We follow Moses and get into a big, roomy boat. We are about to put off for shore when a rival boatman spies one member of our party who, so says the deceived and irate waterman, promised him his custom. Our vessel is at once

invaded and the unfortunate victim seized. We beat them off with sticks and umbrellas, and the ladies scream because they think we are going to be upset, but presently we tumble the last of the invaders over the side, and are off with shouts of triumph to get our first glimpse of an Eastern land.

Moses takes us through streets whose squalid, dirty houses almost meet overhead, and form a canopy that keeps out the sun, but imprisons the air. The native donkey drivers, with gentle, winning smiles, and sweet, silvery voices, entreat you to show your skill in the control of their asses. Pariah dogs snarl at your heels, but do not bite. You stare at the Arab lady, veiled to the eyebrows, but she does not resent the inquisitiveness of your gaze. She is used to it, and would probably feel hurt if you, out of politeness, should appear indifferent. Her bare feet tread lightly over the heaps of decaying refuse that litter the roads.

From these purely native quarters you pass into the Grand Square with its open spaces and lofty trees, and half fancy yourself once more in Europe. Still, however European some of the buildings may be, there is never any mistake as to their real character. There are no museums where your credulity is tested by the exhibition of relics of dubious origin and antiquity. Here there are no coats that Julius Caesar wore when he landed in Great Britain, no pens with which Shakespeare wrote Bacon's plays, and no bones

and skeletons that might just as easily have belonged to someone else as the person or animal to whom they are ascribed.

Our next point of call is Port Said, where we enter that wonderful, useful, and extremely inartistic specimen of modern engineering, the Suez Canal. Port Said is noted as the home of divers forms of vice and wickedness, the last resting place of half the scum of Europe. It is probably one of the most immoral and vicious places on the face of the earth. But passengers are more or less bound to go ashore, for it is here that the steamer takes in fresh supplies of fuel. The ship is soon black with fine coal dust, and, as every door and porthole is closed, the place is decidedly hot, dirty, and generally uncomfortable. One of the chief innocent amusements is donkey riding. There used to be in Port Said an old Arab who looked as though he were steeped in oil and soot, but who proudly informed you, "My name, sir? I am John Fer-r-r-guson o' Glasgaw—o' Glasgaw, mind ye!" He owned six donkeys, of which he was extremely proud. He was a cute individual, and very smart at detecting at a glance the particular nationality of any person he saw approaching. He may be there yet, for all I know.

He saw a Frenchman coming along. "Oui, oui, monsieur, trés bon donkey, go velly fast. Which donkey master likee best? This one name Napoleon, this one Victor Hugo, and this one Co-lo-nial Enterprise." He persuaded the Frenchman to try the powers of Colonial Enterprise,

which, by the way were remarkably feeble, and then turned to meet a German with "All my donkeys name after Germany. Very gut country, Germany. Not same as dirty Frenchman. Master want a ride? This donkey Bismark, and that one the Emperor William." He beguiled the Italian in the name of Garibaldi, and if by dress and speech he recognized an Englishman, he bowed profoundly, and requested that for a shilling an hour, you would be pleased to make Mr. Gladstone, Queen Victoria, or Mrs. Langtry trot round the square.

The journey through the Suez Canal is monotonous in the extreme, for the ship moves very slowly, and on either side is a wide expanse of sandy desert, whose fearful glare is trying to the eyes. The canal widens out at the Bitter Lakes, across whose northern end the Israelitish children made their miraculous passage. It then narrows again, and preserves its uninteresting appearance right on to the end. The steamer stops in the Gulf of Suez for a few hours to take in mails, and sometimes a few passengers, but no one goes ashore here, as the town of Suez is a few miles distant.

The general character of the climate and of the morality of the countries lying east of this place have been well summed up in one of Kipling's songs, where he puts into the mouth of Tommy Atkins the words:

> "Ship me somewheres east of Suez,
> Where a man can raise a thirst,
> And there ain't no ten commandments,
> And the best is like the worst."

Out of the Gulf of Suez and we reach the Red Sea. At certain seasons of the year the heat is unbearable. The water taken from a depth of seventy or eighty feet below the surface of the sea, at six o'clock in the morning has been said to register a temperature as high as ninety degrees. This may be a sailor's yarn, but if so, the very exaggeration but serves to emphasize the disagreeable character of the climate. If, in addition to the heat, there be a sandstorm blowing, the whole air is full of a mist made of innumerable particles of fine, hot sand, which blind and suffocate at the same time.

At Aden we are first introduced to the diving boys, who will swim under the vessel and come up again on the other side for sixpence, or dive to great depths in the clear water in pursuit of the same nimble coin. They appear to be perfectly indifferent to the terrible proximity of the sharks that infest these waters.

In Aden itself be careful how you walk in the streets, and do not get trodden underfoot by the long strings of camels that come silently along, laden with merchandize. As there is a hotel in the town where thirst can be properly relieved, you will not be likely to attempt to bargain with the women in the market who, for a few cents, would provide you with a drink of water from the skins they carry on their backs. If camels and skins of water take you back in thought to the days and scenes of the Old Testament, you will not be long before you are still further astonished

with the huge water tanks hewn out of the solid rock, one of them holding 4,500,000 gallons. Aden is barren to the last degree, and is unrelieved by trees, grass, or flowers. It is nothing but a hot, bare sandhill, and is worth nothing to anyone except as a coaling station and a fort. The British flag waves over the house of the Governor, and reminds one of a little story, true or not I do not know, that is frequently told to visitors.

Several years ago a French man-of-war anchored in Aden Harbour and lay there for some time, while people speculated as to the reason of the visit. One night the Governor gave a ball, and amongst his guests were the officers from the French ship. A young lieutenant, under the influence of the governor's champagne and a pair of twinkling eyes, informed the English lady with whom he was dancing, that the ship would be leaving in a day or two, as they were going to erect the French flag on a barren, sandy little island in the Red Sea, called Perim. A few minutes later the lady conveyed the intelligence to the Governor, and an English gun-boat steamed out of the harbour while it was still dark, so that when the Frenchmen went to Perim, they found the flag of Old England waving gaily up aloft.

Where do these stories originate ?

XXXII

NIGHT-TIME IN THE TROPICS

THE subject of this short sketch has a poetical ring about it. The reality is, however, far from being attractive. There is little of the sentimental or the romantic about the genuine article. Everybody is tired and wants to sleep. The hot day has gone, and the cool night winds begin to stir. The sun has gone to rest, without any intervening warning of sunset. Darkness hangs heavily on the withered palm leaves. But there is no quiet.

In the jungle round the bungalow the tiger is abroad, and half the insect world is awake. The birds have ceased to sing. The butterflies are hiding their brilliant colours in the deep shadows. Yet there is noise. The air is full of strange sounds. Millions of living creatures who have slept during the day, awake with the darkness, and make the night-time ring again and again with the sound of their merriment.

In every ditch, the bull frogs crowd together. They do not croak ; they cannot be said to sing ; and their speech is not that of men. Their music is that of unoiled machinery, of grating wheels and rusty hinges. It is a fog-horn with a cold. It is an elephant with asthma. Hundreds of them

join in the chorus and play a musical variation of Follow my Leader. One, two, three—and then a deep *ooug oug*—silence. One, two, three, *ooug oug*, and so on, for hours. Only when the sun rises does the song cease and the revellers retire.

Cocks crow at all hours of the night. Their conduct is extremely reprehensible, as they crow all day also. Some old rooster in the distance serenades his lady love. Some other old rooster hears him. Rooster number one will not be beaten, and louder crowing ensues. Another bird enters the competition. The shrill treble of the cocks mingles with the deep bass of the frogs, and intensifies the midnight harmonies without sweetening them. All the discords that have been invented since the Creation are here blended into one.

The pariah dogs bark. There is no work for a pariah dog to do all day, so he passes your waking hours in soft repose. At night he has no work to do either, so he passes his waking hours in seeing that you get no reward for your daily toil. His voice is merely a new variety of discord. Short, sharp, snappy barks ; deep-chested bays ; long, loud howls like those of beasts in pain ; sobs and cries ; laughs and shrieks ; any and every noisy, horrible sound that ear ever imagined or suffered is the delight of the pariah in the hours between the midnight and the dawn.

Millions of insects fly to every light. In the morning their dead bodies may be gathered up by the shovelful. The industrious ant bites you in

the dark, knowing well, for he is a shrewd creature, that you can neither see nor catch him. Grasshoppers and crickets chirp and chatter like a lot of old women at a country fair. Big, black, hard, horny beetles buzz like a hive of giant bees. A few night-birds shriek. Night-moths, with lovely wings, fly round and round the lamps, only to singe their wings and fall upon the ever increasing heaps of dead beneath.

Mosquitoes, the greatest insect pest of a hot country, sing a song of triumph in your ears and bite indiscriminately. Clothes are no protection, they would sting through a brick wall if there were a white man on the other side.

The sky is ablaze with lightning—flashes, sheets, forks of living fire all over the darkened sky. It runs round the edges of the clouds, plays hide and seek amongst the stars, laughs in the face of the moon, and romps and rollicks in its robes of blue, green, and yellow fire.

Fireflies illumine every branch and twig. The trees twinkle with myriads of fairy lights. Every place is full of light and sound. Heaven pity the victim of insomnia; for him there is no rest and no peace. Night-time in the tropics—a time of discord, discomfort, and danger.

IN FINLAND

XXXIII

A STUDY OF THE FATHERLAND
A FINNISH EXPERIMENT

From time to time the attention of the civilized world is called to the trials and sufferings of the Finnish subjects of the Russian Empire. Interesting and pathetic as is the story of the efforts of this brave handful of northerners to preserve their nationality and freedom, it is not more interesting than the story of the various social and political experiments that have been set on foot for raising the condition of the mass of the population, and for intensifying that love of the homeland which can alone prevent the destruction of a true patriotic feeling. One of the most striking of these experiments is that which may be best described under the title of Home Research.

Finland is a wide country, greater in area than the British Isles, and yet with a population of only about three millions. Scientific research upon purely Finnish history and conditions, if conducted upon lines familiar in countries much richer, would be so slow and ineffective as to be almost impossible. Hence there arises the necessity of enlisting the services of everybody, from landowner to peasant, in a work which is possible,

in some degree, to every member of the community. In countries like England there are innumerable societies for historical, scientific, and sociological study, but they are unrelated, and even in the most educated quarters the work is done by a few enthusiastic scholars and students, and the mass of even the educated population takes little interest of any kind in the researches that are prosecuted. The idea of enlisting the co-operation of the agricultural labourer would be dismissed with ridicule, and the project for a comprehensive survey of the history, geology, natural history, and climate of a remote village, conducted by the inhabitants themselves, would appear as an impracticable and worthless idea. Dr. Mill, therefore, is worthy of a deep debt of gratitude, in as much as he has led the way in securing the help of many public bodies and private individuals in the collection of rainfall data throughout the British Isles. What has been accomplished in this direction may well lead us to hope that other forms of work would be equally successful if equally well organized, and what is possible may be gathered from the account to be given of the Home Research Movement in Finland.

Intellectual life in Finland may be said to have begun with the baptizing of the pagan Finns in 1157, by the English bishop Henry, but it was not till 1640 that the first University was founded, an event that took place in the port of Åbo. Up to this date all higher education had been ob-

tained abroad, and little attention had been paid to Finnish history or to the material she presented for scientific study. One of the first movements towards a better knowledge of the fatherland was made, when the students were required, as the subject of their Latin orations, to describe their native places. These orations were of more value as proofs of good Latinity and oratorical ability than as examples of scientific accuracy. To these were added, later, studies of Swedish and Finnish topography, written by the professors.

The eighteenth century was marked by famine, plague, war and bloodshed, and the people were brought to the verge of ruin. With the termination of this epoch of blood and fire a more definite and vigorous study of Finnish racial and scientific problems was instituted. Guided by excellent and devoted teachers, men set to work to make a detailed study of local conditions. Underlying their work was a double motive, the value of it to the nation in supplying accurate data for the use of investigators, and the value of it to the meanest worker in making him familiar with the many points of interest that his land possessed, and at the same time helping him to forget the miseries and the trials through which that land had recently passed. The university graduates assisted by the professors, as before, issued a number of descriptions of small areas, which were of greater accuracy and value than those that had been produced in the previous century.

At the same time, the heads of the churches

sent out instructions to the country clergy to look for reminiscences of the past, and to record, with all the accuracy they could, the viscissitudes of their own special congregations. Maps of the different parishes were made under the direction of the newly-founded body of land surveyors, and to these maps the surveyors added explanations and descriptions based on the knowledge acquired during the progress of their work. In the newspapers published in Åbo in 1771 and afterwards, short descriptions of rural districts were given, and in 1797 the work received a further impetus through the formation of the Finnish Provincial Agricultural Society, whose members readily gave their services to the business of accurate observation and record.

The nineteenth century resembled the eighteenth in that it opened with violent political storms. Finland was torn from her ancient association with Sweden and, by her incorporation with the Russian Empire, commenced a new era in her national life. Russia could give her little help towards her intellectual development. She was thrown on her own resources unless she wished to lapse into that semi-barbarism that is the condition of much of the dominions that own the sway of the Tsar. Stimulated by the desire for intellectual advancement and for the preservation of her threatened nationality, the Finns founded a number of literary and scientific societies, which grew up round the new University at Helsingfors. Each of these societies devoted

itself to some special department of research on matters purely Finnish and, thanks to their activity, innumerable contributions have been made towards the detailed knowledge of special areas. At the same time, topographical, historical, and economic data have been collected by private individuals and public bodies, by the press and by the men of letters.

The members of the University, not having had their attention diverted by golf and cricket, were irresistibly drawn to the efforts made by these newly-founded agents for research. Many members, in one way or another, gave assistance to the *Societas pro fauna et pro flora fennica*, founded in 1821, to create a Finnish Natural History Museum, and to throw light upon the botany and zoology of every corner of the country. During the long summer vacation other students roamed about the country, collecting existing specimens of folk songs and legends, which have since been indexed and preserved by the Finnish Literary Society, founded in 1831. The folk-lore collections of this society are amongst the richest in the world, and they were made, not by specialists, but by devoted young students, and even by peasants. One peasant alone, Matti Pohto, quite uneducated, enriched the University Library by a collection of 3,000 rare Finnish manuscripts which he collected as he tramped about the country.

In the 'seventies, the student corporations, which are a kind of undergraduate clubs, undertook to collect material of ethnographical im-

portance, and each summer saw fresh expeditions to remote quarters of the thinly peopled land. The result was a Finnish Ethnographical Museum which grew to such an extent that its management far outstripped the capabilities of the young people to whom it owed its origin. The collection was therefore presented to the State, and constitutes the nucleus of the ethnographical department of the Finnish National Museum. The peasant, as usual, played his part, and a landless worker, Solomon Vilksman, was responsible for the addition of 517 stone implements belonging to the different Stone Ages.

Owing to the fact that all these movements for the collection of data and materials concerning the progress of the national life originated at the University, and were conducted mainly under the direction of the professors and their students, the mass of the people was not directly or actively interested. In the last few decades, however, there has been a remarkable alteration in the interest evinced by the rural population in work such as we have outlined above. The twentieth century, in Finnish history, will be noted for the awakening of the nation as a whole to co-operation with the professor and the student in intellectual enterprises, and with the statesman and the reformer in work of great social and political importance.

The year 1881 saw the foundation of the first provincial museum, the Åbo Historical Museum. Considering the conditions prevailing in Finland, the growth of this museum has been incredibly

rapid. It now fills sixty rooms in the old castle at Åbo, and it has served as a model for other museums in other places. In the last thirty years, twenty other provincial museums of similar type have been created. Three years after the opening of the Åbo Historical Museum the board of management began to issue "Contributions to the History of Åbo." Several volumes were produced and, when funds fell short, a new society was founded, whose sole business it was to find the means for further publications. The example of Åbo was again rapidly followed, and there is now in existence a large number of historical monographs, richly illustrated, dealing with different towns. Owing to the generosity of the local authorities and of private individuals, these are sold at a price which places them within reach of the very humblest.

Somewhat contemporary with the foundation of the Åbo Museum was that of the Kuopio Patriotic Society for research in the province of Savolaks—its dialects, history, ethnology, and folk-lore. This society issues its own periodical, and has founded a Historical-Ethnographical Museum. A little later, this small country town of only 15,000 inhabitants indulged in the luxury of a museum of Natural History also.

But the first move to what may genuinely be described as "home" research came about 1894, when a rural parish itself took charge of the scientific investigation of its own surroundings, past and present. This happened in the parish of

Lojo, in the south of Finland. The parish, which is widely scattered, as is the custom in the Land of a Thousand Lakes, contains only 5,300 inhabitants. The village, one might almost say the hamlet of Lojo, is, however, quite a tiny place, and suggests a few hundreds of inhabitants rather than the numbers given above. It is just such a quiet little country place as may be counted by the score in every county of our own land, and where the only intellectual interests are to be found in the village school and the church and chapel. In this country such an agricultural settlement is hardly the place we should choose in which to set on foot a great educational experiment, demanding the intelligent and persistent co-operation of even the poorest of the inhabitants.

The history of the society founded in Lojo is here given in some detail as an example of what is gradually being accomplished all over Finland, and of what can be achieved in a poor district when the work is well organized and supported by all the members of the community.

In the spring of 1894 about thirty persons met in Lojo and instituted the society of the *Friends of Home Research in Lojo.* Whilst all earlier descriptions of rural districts had been the work of one or two inquirers who had tried the impossible task of dealing with the history, archæology, geology, and meteorology, and so on of the parish, here the plan was tried of splitting the work into small parts and of taking the different parts into consideration, one by one, as money and other

circumstances permitted. By dealing with the matter in this way, the promoters of the scheme hoped to get data of real scientific value, to enlist everyone in the enterprise, and to achieve some permanently valuable results, even if the society should tumble to pieces after a short time. The peasant, in particular, was to be got to assist with observations, notes, and statements, not merely for the good of society but also for the extension of his own individual interest in his immediate surroundings. Instead of dying a premature death, the society is still alive, and has done a considerable amount of genuine scientific work within its own restricted area. The members of the society, scientists outside the parish, delegates from other bodies who were benevolently watching the enterprise, and the peasants and farmers, have loyally co-operated in this unique educational experiment. A description of some of the results of the experiment are worth recording.

METEOROLOGY.—By means of instruments received from the Central Meteorological Office at Helsingfors, a station was erected in 1901. This was at first supported solely by the Lojo society, but it soon proved so successful and valuable that it was taken over by the State. Lojo occupies an interesting position, being a kind of transitional locality between towns possessing coast and inland climates. In different parts of this parish the teachers, tradesmen, and others, have made regular measurements of snowfall, which have since been edited and published, and which prove

that even within the boundaries of the parish itself there are local differences of climate that require further study and explanation.

HYDROGRAPHY.—Maps indicating the depth of Lojo lake and other waters in the parish have been drawn up, two of which have been printed. Series of statistics, extending over many years, are now in hand, dealing with the height of the water, the temperature fluctuations during the course of the year at different depths, the transparency and colour of the water, the condition of the bottom and the shores, and ice phenomena in spring and autumn. One peasant, even before the society was founded, had taken the dates, for fifty years, of the times when the lake in his neighbourhood was frozen over, and the dates when the ice was free, and another had supplied details as to the work done in his mill by the rapids that supply the power for his machinery.

OROGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY.—Researches have resulted in certain discoveries of geological importance, including the presence of an anticline with a length of forty kilometres, but with a breadth of only three to four metres.

FLORA AND FAUNA.—Thanks to the efforts of several botanists and zoologists, rich collections of specimens of great interest have been made and partly worked out. So far, however, funds have not been available for the publication of the important monographs for which these collections form the basis. Summaries have been issued about several groups of animals and plants, especially

about those which in any way affect the agricultural possibilities of the parish.

GEOGRAPHY.—In the summer of 1906 a party of students spent their holidays in the parish, and a number of new and important observations was made. A map of the parish on the scale of 1:40,000 is just being printed, and it will be sold so cheaply that it will possibly find its way into every cottage in the district. That a peasant should buy a map at all is significant of much in Finland. The beginning has been made of a systematic record of local names of which a great number are to be found everywhere, and some of which are of ancient origin and of great value to the philologist.

ARCHÆOLOGY.—All earlier statements about the memorials of the past have been carefully examined by specialists, and in some places excavations have been undertaken. In one corner of the parish a rich collection of implements was obtained. These belonged to the Bronze and Early Iron Ages. In another place many relics of the Stone Age were unearthed, and a small illustrated booklet has been published dealing with about 200 of them.

HISTORY.—One of the first acts of the society was to search for information about the district in private and public archives. The search was crowned with instant success, and a document of some importance was published as No. I of "Contributions to the History of Lojo Parish." Two volumes have also been issued dealing with the

period 1323-1745. They are part of a contemplated larger work about the ecclesiastical conditions of Lojo. The author is the vicar of the parish, and an enthusiastic student of local history. Other publications include a history of the old school which existed from 1659-1816, an account of the tragi-comic fights between the clergymen of the parish, and a list of the markets and market-places of a bygone day.

As these contributions to the history of the parish appeared, many who had hitherto shown little interest in the movement began to evince a decided wish to help. Eleven owners of estates paid for the publication of more of the records, and their assistance was so generous that it was found possible to add a series of excellent and valuable illustrations. The commune made a grant of £20 towards the work, quite a large sum for a small place like Lojo.

History of Art.—Lojo contains a church built in the thirteenth century. Its walls and ceiling are covered with 180 curious frescoes—one great picture history. At the invitation of the society an expert was called in to decipher the meaning of the frescoes, and to prepare an illustrated account of them. This has also been published.

Statistics.—The economic statistics about Lojo, covering a period from 1571 to 1850, which were deposited in various public archives, were revised and the results given to the public. A comprehensive series of statistics, dealing with local conditions of agriculture, the sizes of the

different holdings, the number of animals on the farms, the hours of work, rents, household expenditure, etc., was collected from all the householders in the parish in 1894 and 1895, and portions of these, of general interest, have been published.

Publications.—Twenty-seven volumes of the *Contributions to the History of Lojo Parish* have been prepared. They contain 1,168 pages, 80 illustrations, and 3 maps. Of these, four only are in print, funds having failed for the present.

Pictures.—In order to get a complete pictorial record of the present condition of the parish, over 600 views and photos have been gathered together. They are all indexed and arranged in a simple handy way.

A house for the village archives has been erected. It is of fireproof materials, and was built at the cost of the local authorities. In this building every farm has its own box for the preservation of title deeds and other records of value for the future. The ambitious village has now decided to found a local museum devoted to the history and ethnology of the parish.

This detailed account of the work at Lojo explains the nature of the aspirations of the founders of the Society for Home Research. We must again emphasize their double intention—to collect data and to educate the people as the result of scientific observations voluntarily undertaken. Lojo stands far ahead of any other parish as yet in the completeness and thoroughness with which it has gone to work. Where so much is done for

nothing, it has been found that an annual grant of from eight to twelve pounds will suffice for any one department of research during the first year, and that the subsequent expenditure is not very much greater.

Propaganda work throughout the country has been largely the work of the students at the University. During their holidays they make themselves useful at the schools, found libraries and reading rooms, and arrange lectures. They have given many lectures on the Home Research movement, and have called the people together to discuss suitable forms of organization, and to draw up rules and regulations. They have made appeals in the papers, issued circulars, sent forth ambassadors, and have started a collection of local views dealing with homes, farms, folk-dances, old furniture, and hundreds of other objects. These collections now number many thousands of valuable and artistic records. The students have also founded a number of periodicals devoted to special districts.

The spread of the movement owes a great deal to the Press. From the very first the papers have grasped the patriotic and educational significance of the ideas of the propagandists, and have willingly opened their columns for articles, news, and popular appeals. One newspaper hit upon the brilliant idea of issuing, as a supplement, data and records, for which no means of publication existed, owing to lack of funds. The example was quickly followed. From time to time these historical and

scientific supplements appear, and they often run to as many as twenty-four pages. One stands amazed at a peasant population that can digest twenty-four pages of archæological and scientific data about its own neighbourhood.

As the number of societies increased the difficulty arose of following their development, and correlating their work. About three years ago a central committee was formed to act as a link between the different provincial organizations, to represent the movement at important gatherings, to collect reports of the activities of the different associations, to found a library of native and foreign literature of use to the movement, to obtain the services of experts who would act as guides and critics, to issue a special organ, and to arrange for annual conferences for the discussion and exhibition of the results of the past year's industry.

The central committee publishes two periodicals, one in Swedish and one in Finnish, entitled *The Native Place.* They contain about 400 quarto pages, and are sold at less than two shillings. They are edited by men of great scientific ability, and have obtained a wide popularity. The Finnish Diet granted a sum of four hundred pounds to the central committee for propaganda and publication purposes, but this was struck out by the Russianized Senate.

If such a united movement is possible amongst a peasant population widely scattered over a country such as Finland, is it not possible here in

England ? Most of our associations for social and moral progress are too vague and diffuse. The boy who has just left school does not want to be told repeatedly of his backwardness, and to be urged to be useful, and to be loyal to his king and his country, and yet to be left without any guidance as to what to do. The special advantage of a social and reforming character which such a movement would possess for us, would be the encouragement for every member of every school, elementary or secondary, to do something of a practical kind according to his own bent. One boy might collect meteorological data, another might become an architectural photographer, another could keep statistics relating to his own village, and there is probably no one, if caught young enough, who could not be made to feel that he possessed a definite usefulness to his own neighbourhood, outside his own particular trade or occupation. In villages in particular, some such organization might be tried as an experiment. It is of no use beginning with the adult population. They are beyond salvation. I have little faith in any movement intended to reform grown-up people. Usually they have lost both imagination and enthusiasm.

In Finland there are practically no class distinctions such as exist with us, and co-operation between all sections of the community is easily effected. Probably, in an English village, it would be difficult to get the butcher's boy and the young Etonian to collaborate in local research, but a man

of ideals and of practical organizing power might spend his time much more unprofitably than in trying the experiment. It would cost him little but time and labour, and might bring him more than fame, usefulness.

XXXIV

VIBORG

VIBORG is an old commercial town on the Gulf of Finland. It is little visited by the tourist, and there is much probability that the man who "does" Switzerland in two days, and Paris in two hours, would find little to detain him. The majority of those who come to Viborg merely arrive *en route* for somewhere else. But, apart from the fact that this town is the most convenient starting point for several of the show places of Finland, it possesses attractions of its own for the man who likes to saunter about and see other people doing unaccustomed work in unaccustomed ways.

The best way to reach Viborg from Helsingfors is by steamer, as the train journey offers little that is attractive, except its own special excitements, and these can be better sampled elsewhere, where the route lacks the fascination and the variety of the water-way to Viborg. I arrived by train from a point on the Russian frontier, the rail in this case being the only available route. As I left the station with my luggage, a burly, good-natured official—policeman, soldier, or railway porter, I don't know which—handed me a circular piece of

tin about as big as a budding ash-tray. On this was stamped "86." I hadn't the remotest idea what to do with it. The thing was over large for my waistcoat pocket, and I couldn't put it round my neck, for there was no hole for a string, and if there had been I should have been no better off, for I had no string. The kind man who had made the present shouted out something in a very loud voice, and a drosky drove up with a great bearded, surly-faced Russian for a driver. The unwashed Jehu held out his hand, and I offered him the tin label. He took it with alacrity, and popped it in a little bag slung by a strap over his shoulder. That was the last I saw of that tin ticket, though I encountered others of the same species at other railway stations, this being the orthodox method of delivering the long-suffering traveller into the hands of his hereditary foe. As I stepped into the drosky I muttered "Hotel Societetshuset." These are not easy words to say, at least the second isn't. The driver stared at me for half a minute as if I had addressed him in an unknown tongue. If he were unacquainted with the Finnish language he was obviously out of place at a Finnish railway station.

He fired off a lot of explosives that suggested sundry unpleasant reflections upon my linguistic abilities, none of which were at all intelligible. I feebly replied "Hotel," and omitted the "Societetshuset." I was anxious not to cause any further irritation of the evil-looking coachman. Off he rattled, with his feet on my new pale-green canvas-

covered trunk, and presently deposited me at the door of the hotel to which I had requested to be taken.

There are other hotels in Viborg, but I chose this one because in the little guide-book I had purchased it stated that the head-waiter spoke English. That waiter had left since the compilation of the guide-book, and I could find no one who could speak a word of the finest of modern languages. I addressed the porter.

" Do you speak English ? "

" No," expressed by many and varied gesticulations.

" Parlez-vous Français ? "

" No," the signs being still more energetic, and the denial more voluble.

" Sprechen-Sie Deutsch ? "

" Ja," and he went off like an electrified oat-fed drosky pony. The worst of the matter was I didn't understand a word of German myself, so that when he had finished his lengthy and eloquent oration I was no wiser than when he began. He showed signs of mingled disgust and disappointment when he found out how he had been wasting his talent. This was excusable, and I excused him.

There is one thing that is always intelligible at a hotel. If you drive up with luggage the proprietor, or his representative, assumes that you want a room and may require food. I was in need of both. I was shown to No. 3, an apartment that possessed all the usual accessories, and, in addition, on the dressing table, two clean wooden

THE CASTLE AT VIBORG.

THE SAIMA CANAL.

[*Facing page* 282

cigarette-holders. I made use of most of the accessories, but declined any kind of familiar intercourse whatsoever with the cigarette tubes.

There are a few regulation sights at Viborg, and the nearest of these to the hotel is "Fat Katerina," in the market-place. Now this corpulent Kate is not a female, but a round tower of great circumference and strength, reminding one of those rotund market women at Helsingfors, whose obesity has assumed remarkable proportions. "Fat Katerina" was once part of the fortifications that surrounded the town, for Viborg, as a central point in the province of Karelia, was of much importance, and was strongly fortified. The walls that surrounded it were begun some four and a half centuries ago. The utility of the round tower is not very apparent at the present day, except that rows of indolent drosky drivers bask in its expansive shadow during the hot hours of the day. The old walls have disappeared, and their place has been taken by an esplanade, where tall and shady trees form sheltered avenues, and where a number of green lawns are embroidered in circular patches with brilliant flowers. In this esplanade there is a fine restaurant, where you take your meals in the open air to the sound of merry music. The Finns, having to spend six months of the year in cold and darkness, make up for the sombre period of the year by enjoying the open air and the sunshine during the few months when the sun really shines upon them. These open-air restaurants are a feature of all the towns,

even the little ones. The bands that play an accompaniment to the audible mastication of the throng are excellent, and their repertoire extensive and classical. You drink your soup with Massenet, take your joint with Wagner, and sip your coffee to the soothing and mellifluous strains of Mendelssohn.

Not far away from "Fat Katerina" is the castle, about six hundred years old, and built to keep secure this part of the country when the Swedes wanted to prevent the Russians entering what was then their territory. Round the castle and its courtyard runs a granite rampart, that rises sheer out of the waters of the gulf. The building was at the height of its power in the fourteenth century, and at that time was held by many powerful men; but as the fortifications of the town increased, the castle lost its significance, fell into neglect, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century was in ruins. The Russians have recently restored the old shot-battered walls and tower, and use the place as a barracks. In these times it would be useless for defensive purposes, and so it is wisely left unfortified. It is a grim and gloomy-looking building, a veritable symbol in stone and iron of the heavy hand of Russia. Visitors are not allowed to enter. That is something to be thankful for. First of all it saves you sixpence, or its Finnish equivalent; then you have not to breathe damp air in stinking dungeons; there are no names and dates of builders of walls and towers to be thundered into your ears by raw-

voiced custodians intent upon the extraction of yet another coin from your depleted purse. As the Russians are making use of the barracks for their soldiers there will perhaps never appear over the portal that fearsome announcement that disfigures so many castles in many parts of the world, "Admission 6d." I have an idea that the real reason for building castles in the olden days was that they were intended as a kind of investment, so that the degenerate sons of a lordly race could become showmen in a grand and easy fashion. If ever a charge for admission to Viborg Castle be levied, then you will have to go inside. No self-respecting English tourist would dream of doing otherwise. Think of the hundreds of castles you have visited, the miles of ramparts and dungeons along which you have dragged your weary feet, the thousands of tower and turret steps up which you have breathlessly clambered, and then, when in your righteous wrath you are denouncing the million evil deeds of Russia, remember that she has shut upon you the gates of the Castle of Viborg, and for one moment cease your clamour.

Opposite the castle there is a museum. It was locked when I got there, and I forebore to ring the bell. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you, and never disturb the slumbers of a somnolent custodian.

There is a market place that, from early morning till noon, is a source of pure delight. The women at the stall are so fat and cheery, the wild strawberries are so red and cheap, and the butter

smells so sweetly, that you want to purchase everything on the stalls and make the acquaintance of everyone you see. There are stalls, like other stalls, where meat and vegetables are sold, and where mistress and maid go picking and choosing and bargaining for the daily dinner; there are fish stalls and cheese waggons; ice-cream carts and tables where they sell sundry non-intoxicants of brilliant crimson and yellow hues; there are piles of flat, round, acid plasticiny loaves, but especially are there rows of little Kringlas cakes, the speciality of the district.

By the water-side are boats, with the masts lowered and sails thrown over them to form tents, under which potatoes and cheap crockery are offered to purchasers, who seem almost as loth to part with their money as they are anxious to get hold of the vegetables or the earthenware.

Most characteristic of all is the wood market. There is no natural supply of coal or oil in Finland, but there are extensive forests, and wood is almost the universal fuel for home and factory, train and steamer. The handling of the millions and millions of logs consumed in this way must afford employment to many people. Much of the fuel is brought to Viborg in wide, clumsy boats, and then stacked on the quay. The logs are thrown out by the women, stacked by the women, and I should not have been surprised, though I know it is not the case, if I had been told that the trees had been planted, tended, and felled by women, for woman does many curious things in Finland.

BARGE LADEN WITH FUEL · VIBORG.

A FINNISH HAYFIELD.

[*Facing page* 286

Women give you your ticket at the railway station, cash your cheque at the bank, sweep the streets, slaughter cattle, carry bricks, engage in brick-laying, plumbing and plastering, and in many other trades and occupations that we regard as particularly fitted for men. They mow grass and rake hay, but, with a tenderness that is not altogether knocked out of them by this severe and incessant toil, they let the men sit on the carts and sledges that carry the produce of the fields to the barns and the sheds. They have their compensation; every woman has a vote, and a number of them have also seats in parliament.

The modern architecture of Viborg is not quite so unconventional as that to be found in the capital, but there are sufficient evidences of the quaint, not to say extravagant, devices so dear to the heart of the new Finnish architect. Two impertinent young profiles kissing a full moon, much to the apparent satisfaction of the moon, grace the entrance to a book-shop, while a wicked-looking, semi-Egyptian, semi-Finnish head leers at those who make use of a certain chemist's shop.

The letter boxes attached to the walls are painted yellow, not red as with us. They all bear two post-horns crossed, and a representation of the back of an envelope. Their function is unmistakable, even to the meanest intellect. What a genius the Finn has for making the crooked ways straight! He puts the names on streets and on railway tickets in three languages, and the notices in the railway carriages in six! He sticks a

picture of a knife and fork opposite the names of those stations where food is obtainable. He charges a fixed price for a meal, and lets you help yourself and eat all you can hold. But in one instance I was bewildered by the apparent contradiction of two official notices. It was not at Viborg, but at a station where I was temporarily stranded not many miles away. There was a notice on the walls of the waiting-room forbidding smoking, but there were ash-trays on the table. Now, which was a man supposed to observe—the prohibition of the notice, or the invitation of the ash-tray ?

XXXV

A VISIT TO THE FALLS OF IMATRA

FINLAND is a land where almost the only attractions are those provided by nature. The man-made delights are few, but amongst them must certainly be numbered the Saima Canal. The word " canal " to an Englishman usually suggests stagnant water, brickfields, coal-mines, refuse heaps, and dead cats. The canals of Finland are as beautiful as her lakes and rivers. I was at Viborg, bound for a journey through the Saima Canal, *en route* for Imatra and Wallinkoski. Many boats make use of the canal, but only one connects with the cross-country ride from Rattijarvi to Imatra. I paid first-class fare, and travelled third; only in the latter way does one meet the most interesting travellers of the country. The steamer left the castle of Viborg behind, passed under the railway bridge and into a land-locked bay, whose tree-clad shores were dotted with the villas where many wealthy Russians make their summer home. Across this lake came several tugs, towing the lumbering timber barges that bring the produce of the northern forests, in the form of sawn planks and logs, to the ports of the south. In about three-quarters of an hour we

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reached the first lock, and I had time to look at my ticket. It was printed in three languages—Finnish, Russian, and French. The last language was, in this case, almost useless. Few French or English pass this way, and the chief foreign visitors are Germans and Russians. Out of the twenty to thirty first-class passengers that morning, only about three could not speak German. I was one of the three.

The Saima Canal is the greatest, but not the only great, artificial waterway in Finland. It was completed between fifty and sixty years ago, at the comparatively trifling cost of less than half a million sterling. Its total length is thirty-seven miles, but of these, seventeen are provided by a chain of lakes. The other twenty miles were cut out of the solid granite. In its course, the canal rises, by means of locks, through a height of 279 feet. From time to time the boat calls at picturesque little landing-stages, where children are busy washing their stockings, or selling wild strawberries, while their male relatives are engaged in boat-building or fishing. The scenery is varied. There are narrow bays, steep and rocky shores, wide expanses of calm water, with still tree-fringed creeks, where water-lilies bloom in thousands; woods and forests, where the dark hues of the firs emphasize the silver of the birches that glitter in the sunrise, and where the quivering aspen trembles like a little child, afraid of the tall and stately beings that surround and keep her company. The navigation of the lakes

is not a simple matter. There are sunken rocks and dangerous channels; but these have all been surveyed, and across the broad waters stretch lines of little red flags, while whitened rocks on shore and island serve as unmistakable landmarks to the man at the wheel. At convenient spots piles of wood are stacked on the banks, for use as fuel on the steamers. Glimpses of Finnish life are caught from time to time as the comfortable little vessel speeds on her way. Here are several small log-huts, suggestive of the homes of those who are civilizing the backwoods of Canada; yonder are the less substantial plank-walled, red-painted, peasant dwellings. In the fields are men and women cutting hay, drying it on wooden structures above the ground, or carting it away to the hay sheds on tiny sledges.

The boat leaves Viborg at nine, and reaches Rattijärvi at twelve. The sun is behind the traveller all the way, so that the prow of the vessel is the best place from which to see the landscape. Where the locks are two or three in succession passengers go ashore to stretch their legs. These short promenades form a delightful relief from the constant sitting, for there is no room to stroll about on the boat itself. At Rattijärvi the passenger alights and refreshes himself at the inn. In about an hour's time the diligence arrives. Now, if the canal is one man-made wonder, the diligence is another. It is something like a small furniture waggon, with the seats placed crosswise. It holds only eight people but is drawn by

three horses. As there are no very steep hills you wonder why three horses are wanted. The animals are changed half-way, so that you employ six horses for a journey of twenty-six miles. As I was the only passenger who went on by the diligence, I thought the provision of transport animals rather extravagant. That was because I did not know the roads. In England they would hardly be called tracks. When you go over an excessively deep transverse rut—first cousin to a ditch—you bound off your seat, high into the air, and come down with a bang. Motoring over boulders is child's play to riding in a Finnish diligence. I do not know how many houses we passed on the drive of twenty-six miles. Perhaps twenty-six; I did not count. For the most part the road lies through unreclaimed forest and half-reclaimed land, where the plough has to find its way through a heap of boulders and a thicket of rotting tree stumps. From the most lonely spots in the forest, troops of fair-haired children leap out to offer the traveller baskets of wild berries and nosegays of flowers, or, still more annoying, to do a little begging in a gentle kind of way. Now and then among the trees can be seen the silver waters of some one or other of the thousand lakes and streams that are the characteristic features of the country. After about five hours the roar of the rapids that constitutes the glory of Imatra are heard to the right, and the jolted, shattered passenger descends from the conveyance to behold one of the finest natural sights of

the world. I have seen many famous waterfalls, Niagara included, but in its own way Imatra is unique, and can challenge comparison with many better know waterfalls. Perhaps " waterfall " is not quite the right term to apply to Imatra, and yet " rapid " is equally misleading. Imatra is a combination of both.

The falls of Imatra are formed by a river called the Vuoksen, which carries away the waters of the Saima Lake system. The river flows out at the south-eastern end of the lake, and here " the masses of water, with their enormous power, gathered from a thousand lakes, make their first assault at the barring ridge. In a raging torrent the waters rush down," and form a series of seven or eight rapids, one of which is confined within a narrow gorge about half a mile long, in which it drops sixty feet. At the head of the rapid the stream is spanned by a bridge, which to some extent spoils the view. But if bridges be a necessity, then we may be thankful that this one is no uglier, for too often, when necessity is the mother of invention, her daughter is singularly unattractive. In the days before the bridge, travellers crossed the stream in a basket slung on a rope. On one occasion the contrivance stuck, and an unfortunate Englishman was left suspended for several hours above the boiling torrent. It is difficult to convey to the reader any adequate idea of Imatra, either by words or pictures, for it is impossible to reproduce the roaring of the waters, the motion of their ever-varying shapes, the fanning

of the breeze, or the whispering of the trees. The river is about 300 yards wide above the bridge, and, except for its width, suggests only a mountain torrent, hurrying along, singing to the sea. The stream is broken by a small island on which stand two birch trees, hand in hand, listening to the music. The main channels and the sides are encumbered with huge boulders of reddish granite. Then the passage narrows to about fifty yards, and we get a whirling avalanche of foam. The noise is tremendous, and the angry growl of the waters can be heard at a distance of four or five miles. In one second over a hundred thousand gallons of water rush past the eye. No photograph can give any idea of the noise, or of the jewelled mists that hang over the surface, or of the columns of glittering foam that rise, sometimes to a height of twenty feet, as the maddened river tears its way down the slope. Masses of swirling, treacherous green dash themselves against the rocks and break into cascades of sparkling diamonds. The dark pines bend over to listen to the tumult, and the boulders shiver again under the force of the impact. The water never rests, never subsides; and, beautiful as it all is, it is to me still more terrible as a type of the cruel, relentless, destructive forces of unrestrained nature. Its grandeur suggests violence, its still backwaters treachery and death. The river becomes more peaceful where it expands, seems even to wear a cruel smile of contentment, as if satisfied with its powers for ill. Another hundred yards or so and it breaks

IMATRA · THE TOP OF THE FALL.

IN THE FINNISH ARCHIPELAGO.

[*Facing page* 294

into bigger wavelets, chuckling and crowing like the very incarnation of evil.

I turned away to the trees and rocks upon the banks, almost glad to rest my eyes from the bewildering, dazzling, tormented, writhing masses of foam. There were the companions of the stream, motionless and silent, living their lives peacefully and patiently, undisturbed, unhindered, on the very brink of destruction. Scattered amongst the pine stems are rocks of all sizes, on which are scribbled or cut the names of idiots of all nations. The trunks of the trees, the surfaces of the stones, the railings of protecting barricades and fences are a gazetteer of innumerable places, a long list of thousands of people of many nationalities who have visited this unique spot.

I spent many hours at Imatra. Just as I would make up my mind to depart, a mass of water would dash against a rock and be hurled back to meet the galloping billows from behind. In the conflict, walls and pillars of water would be shattered into foam, or rebuilt in fantastic shapes that rose and fell, formed and re-formed, as they hurried madly to the wide open space beyond. On the second day I walked down the road that lies on the right bank of the stream to the rapids of Wallinkoski, a distance of four miles. Most people drive, but I preferred walking as being less fatiguing on a Finnish road. The rapids at Wallinkoski are not so extensive, but, if anything, they are more picturesque than those at Imatra. They are divided by a small island, to which

adventurous people can be rowed by the local boatmen. So far Wallinkoski has not been spoiled. There are few houses near, and no inns. The booths, where picture postcards and lemonade are offered, are situated at a decorous distance from the vision of the waters. At Imatra, a big, modern, up-to-date hotel is on one bank, and an iron bridge athwart the stream. As I lay by the waterside, when the crowd had gone back in its carriages, and I had the turmoil to myself, and gazed at the pine-fringed edges of the river, there came to me a memory of that passage from Ruskin describing the pines, rising in serene resistance, self-contained, as they stand " on the inaccessible juts and perilous ledges of the enormous wall, in quiet multitude, each like the shadow of the one beside it—upright, fixed, spectral, as troops of ghosts standing on the walls of Hades, not knowing each other, dumb for ever."

XXXVI

POSTING IN FINLAND

Few tourists choose posting as a means of seeing Finland, and, though the claims of the lakes and rivers are paramount on account of the beauty of the water-ways and the comfort of the travelling, a driving tour is not to be despised. Posting is not recommended for delicate ladies or for those who cannot put up with the simplest of food and the plainest of accommodation, but young men in search of an unconventional holiday, and possessed of the ability to laugh at temporary disarangements of previously well-laid plans, would get enough fun and enjoyment to last for a long time.

The posthouses or inns vary very much in character. Mrs. Tweedie, in her book, *Through Finland in Carts*, has told some woeful stories of dirt and discomfort. Either she was exceptionally unfortunate, or I have been exceptionally fortunate, for I have been in many posthouses, and I have never seen one that was really dirty. In the lonely forest regions of the north they are certainly somewhat bare and unpretentious, but in other places they are comparatively luxurious. The chief bedroom at Wesanto, for instance,

measures over thirty feet each way, and is furnished like a drawing-room. Even when the living-rooms of the family are not too clean or too liberally provided with comforts, the portion of the establishment set apart for the use of the guests is, so far as my experience goes, adequately furnished and scrupulously clean. And the courtesy and kindness with which the traveller is invariably treated would almost, in any circumstances, be a set-off against any little discomforts that might befall him in out-of-the-way corners. In this land of kindly souls the inn appears to exist first for the good of the traveller, and secondly for the benefit of the owner, and in many places the position of landlord of the post-house is sought by well-to-do farmers more as an honour than as a source of financial profit.

Each inn is provided with a "day-book," which contains the distances from the posthouse to all others within reasonable radius, and also the legal tariff for each journey. Drivers may not demand more than the legal fare, and tips are not expected. It is to be hoped that any travellers who may be tempted to try this form of holiday making will not institute the pernicious system of tipping. On arrival at the posthouse the visitor is presented with the day-book, and in it he is expected to give his name, the station from which he came, and the one to which he is going. There is also a space for remarks, and the entry of complaints is not a mere formal matter. The book is sent periodically to the governor of the province,

and a series of complaints would mean the loss of the licence. On one occasion my Finnish friend made a complaint as to the incivility of the driver, and by the time we got to the next station a telephone message had been forwarded, to warn the proprietors to be on their best behaviour. It must be added that uncivil drivers are as rare as telephones are common.

The horses do not give the impression of great strength or endurance, but their performance is better than their appearance. It does not matter how fast or how slowly they seem to move, they generally manage to cover from six to seven miles an hour, and the traveller can pretty safely reckon on this rate of transport. The cost works out at about 2¼d. a mile, which, when shared between two tourists, cannot be considered expensive.

The vehicles are of two kinds, neither of which affords much comfort. They differ in the number of seats and the consequent position of the driver. In carts with one seat the driver sits amongst the feet of the passengers if there be room ; in those with two seats he sits at the back and drives with the reins passed between the two passengers or else carried round the off-side of the right hand passenger. Occasionally, if the horse be untrustworthy, or the road rather dangerous, the driver requests one of his fares to sit behind, and in such cases it is well to accede to the request; but a little independent judgment must also be exercised, for it is pleasanter to sit and easier to drive at the front than at the back, and this fact

sometimes magnifies the faults of the horse and the defects of the road.

The roads vary very much in the different provinces. On the whole they may be described as fair second-class roads, though here and there stretches of highway of really excellent character are encountered, while at other times, especially in the neighbourhood of towns, other stretches are of the most deplorable nature. The cost of keeping the road in repair falls upon the owner of the land through which it passes, and the responsibility for seeing that the landowner does his duty falls upon an inspector, who, judging by the results, is sometimes vigilant, and sometimes not. In the winter-time snow ploughs are used to keep the roads open. The distances are shown by red posts, on which is marked, in black figures on a white ground, the distance in kilometres from the last posthouse, and the distance to the next. Kilometres being shorter than miles, a curious feeling of travelling at a greater rate than is actually the case is induced ; I, at any rate, found it almost impossible to think of the posts as other than mile posts.

The food obtainable is generally plain and simple, but plentiful in quantity. A kind of brown bread—yeast bread—is to be had for the asking, though the peasant will usually supply the sour variety, of which he is so fond, unless specially asked for this kind. Then there are butter, eggs, and cheese, all of the finest quality, and in the neighbourhood of the lakes there is

usually plenty of fresh fish. Meat is not abundant, and delicacies of all kinds are absolutely non-existent. But the pure air supplies an appetite that finds a meal fit for the gods in the homely sustenance of the country people.

The language difficulties are not great, for the simple reason that the traveller will not attempt to speak Finnish. A language with fifteen cases to the noun is not to be tackled frivolously, and the traveller had better be content with a phrase-book, from which he will select, not sentences, but the few words that do really matter. The word "horse" will procure the necessary animal, the word "food" will suffice for the production of whatever the house affords in the way of nourishment, and the word "room" is all that is necessary in order to get a bed. A room costs from 8d. to 10d. a night, a cup of coffee, 1d., and a midday meal or supper about 10d. The guest-room is provided with a little map of the district, with the position of the local posthouse shown in red.

As for the scenes *en route*, they have been dealt with many times. The wide, dreamy forests, the broad stretches of blue or silver water, the homely peasant, the straggling, uneven fence, and the quaint hayricks built on magnified hat-pegs are a never failing source of delight to the wanderer in the wilds of Finland.

XXXVII

OUT FOR THE DAY
A TRIP IN THE BACKWOODS OF EUROPE

I WAS staying at the little town of Kajana in the far north of Europe, in a region of lakes and forests little known except to adventurous fishermen. The way I came to perform the journey I am about to describe was this. I was waiting for my washing. At what date the clothes would be likely to make their triumphal appearance from the laundry I did not know, and I could not ask. I thought that a short steamer journey would vary the monotony of walking up and down the loose planks that do duty for side walks in the town of Kajana, so I got a newspaper and looked at the steamer advertisements. They were puzzling. The name of the place to which I wished to go was Sotkamo. The name of the place at which I was stationed was Kajana. Now in one and the same paper I found Kajana, Kajanun, Kajanista, Sotkamo, Sotkamosta, and Sotkamoon, and I was then unaware that the variations in the terminations of the names meant *to*, *from*, and other prepositional directions.

These things ought to be explained on the timetable itself, but they are not. When the tourist

over-runs the land, as some day he will, when he knows its varied and fascinating charms, and when therefore Finland will no longer be worth visiting for those in search of novelties, all these things will be printed in English, and the utter bewilderment that depressed me will be a thing of the past. After a prolonged spell of disentanglement I pretended to have discovered a boat that left at a quarter to eleven. I thought that this would do nicely. Judging by the distance, as shown on the map, I imagined that the journey would take about two hours at the most, but owing to my constitutional modesty concerning the accuracy of my opinions, I packed a small hand-bag as a precaution against possible disasters. I had only a few minutes in which to complete my preparations, and I was not as careful as I might have been. I took a toothbrush and a card case, but I forgot my comb and soap. I packed my slippers and forgot my pyjamas.

I hailed a drosky and shouted *Boat*—I knew the Finnish for " boat "—and away we went over the ruts and stones that are called streets in Kajana, and country roads outside its bounds. The boat was not a stimulating sight. It appeared to consist of two cabins and a funnel. There was a crowd of children on board, mostly boys. They were wearing trousers that had unmistakably once adorned the parental legs. The garments had been duly shortened, but had not been curtailed circumferentially, so that they folded round the person inside. Where father had worn out his

apparel, pieces of other and differently-coloured trousers had been used to repair the seat of the damage. One boy had a tuck in his hat, the queerest adaptation of human attire that I have yet seen in Europe. The little ones were playing hide and seek. As I am passionately fond of children I joined, unasked, in the game. It at once became all hide, for the youngsters bolted into a mouldy, smelly hole, filled with barrels and bilge water, into which I had not the courage to enter. This was disappointing to me, for I make a point of striking up an acquaintance with the small people of every land I enter. The absence of any common medium of communication is a slight drawback to complete companionship, but it is marvellous what can be accomplished by means of a handful of caramels or a stick of toffee.

Like most peasant children in Finland the hiders had dark skins, blue eyes, and hair bleached to a silvery white. The contrast between the dark skin and the pale tints of the hair and the eyes is a very remarkable one. The tiny passengers were probably enjoying their summer holiday, for all the schools are closed for four months during the long warm days. It is just as likely, however, that they knew no school at all, as educational establishments are few and far between in this region of backwoods, and nowhere throughout the country is education either free or compulsory.

In the schools, all lessons are learned in Swedish and Finnish, and hence the nation is bilingual. At

one time Russian was taught, but this is no longer compulsory. Well-educated persons speak five or six languages and think nothing of it. English possesses few difficulties for those who have mastered the intricacies of Finnish grammar, and an English professor at Helsingfors told me that it was a common thing for young students to learn to read, write, and speak our language sufficiently well for all practical purposes in a month. In olden days such rapidity was not always desirable, and it is related that a student at Åbo University once learned Latin so quickly that the authorities accused him of being in league with the devil, and burned him accordingly.

A whistle warned me that we were about to start. I retreated from the neighbourhood of the dark and smelly hole, and went to the prow of the steamer. The little river broadened out into a lake and then narrowed again to a river continually. The course of the steamer was strewn with islands where the red berries of the mountain ash made bright splashes of colour against a background of fading yellow birch leaves and evergreen pines. The banks were bordered with forests, but although we were only about a hundred to a hundred and fifty miles south of the Arctic Circle, there were no signs of thinning or dwarfing of the vegetation. Behind the wide-extended forest-covered plains rose low, tree-covered hills, whose colours varied with the light and the distance, green in the foreground and purple on the horizon when the hot sun beat

down upon them, cold and grey when the rain clouds swept across the face of the heavens.

There were few landing places on the route, and the boat stopped only at rare intervals. On the rivers and lakes in the south of Finland the steamer stops as often as a train on the District Railway, or a tram in a crowded thoroughfare. But north of Kajana the houses are widely separated, and only occasionally does a thin pillar of light blue smoke curl out above the tree tops betraying the presence of human life. Patches of emerald green by the water side speak of attempts at cultivation, and the house of the farmer, a mere hut of logs, is never far away. If any of the peasants wants to come on board some member of his family will bring him alongside in a cockleshell of a boat, help him up the side of the steamer, and then row back to the homestead. There were few beacon-marks to guide the man at the helm, and yet skilful navigation was here more necessary than usual. A glance over the side of the vessel would often show the rocks gleaming bright beneath the water, and within a few inches of the vessel's sides.

When we arrived at Sotkamo it was three o'clock in the afternoon, and I was hungry. So far I had had no food, as the palatial craft in which I was voyaging possessed no buffet. I looked anxiously at the land. There was a church, a saw-mill, and a few mean houses. Now a church is not a good place in which to obtain food for the body, and the products of a saw mill are

neither palatable nor nourishing. I determined to stick to the boat. It was bound for Ontojoki, and at the worst should be there in another two hours. I would wait and, if necessary, raid a cottage at the other end of the journey. There were other people on the river besides ourselves—men sailing their fifty-foot tar-boats, and men, women, and horses on the timber rafts that were slowly finding their way down the stream. All these people must have bought food somewhere, probably at Ontojoki. We would go and see. We went and we saw. It was about half-past five when we anchored in the desired haven, and all that was in sight was a timber depot. With the exception of one man, who received sundry parcels and barrels from our steamer, not a soul was to be seen. The cargo was unceremoniously tossed ashore, and then we prepared to return. The captain, imagining that I wished to disembark with the bags and the boxes, came to me and signified that I was to get out. The boxes did not belong to me, and I had not the faintest interest in their contents or their owners, so I did not budge.

"Ontojoki," remarked the captain, in sonorous and fluent Finnish.

Pointing majestically to myself I replied, "Kajana, Ontojoki; Ontojoki, Kajana." I waved my hand first in the direction in which we had come, and secondly in the direction in which we were to return. Captain and crew burst into roars of laughter. It was past all their imagining

why I should sit on their little steamer all day without food, merely to go back again, and I could not explain to them that I was merely waiting for my washing.

We had to take in fuel on the way back. The logs were brought to us in a big barge which was fastened alongside the steamer, and we loaded as we went along. The logs were handed up one at a time, and during the process our speed was considerably reduced. Six o'clock passed, seven, and then the evening light began to settle down—not the darkness, but that uncanny glow that in summer, in the northern latitudes, comes as a surprise to the visitor from the south. Nature clothes herself in new and unfamiliar robes. She shines sweet, cool, clean—like an infant after its bath, only quieter. This is the land and the hour of deep silences, when to speak is an impertinence, and to be noisy sacrilege. To travel in the completest harmony with the silences of the white nights of the north, you should be lying on a log raft, or drifting aimlessly in a primeval dug-out.

It was quite dark when we once more drew alongside the few boards that are called the quay at Sotkamo. The first mate tapped me on the shoulder, pointed to his mouth, and remarked in simple but eloquent language, "Food shop." I followed with an unwonted alacrity, for I am rotund. We stopped at the door of a small house. There my guide entered into conversation with a woman and two girls. They spoke in whispers though they knew I did not understand a word

they were saying. What the mate told them I do not know, but they certainly found it very amusing, and had hard work to suppress their merriment. The proprietress of the establishment led me into a little back room and hastily banged the door. In the twinkling of an eye the place shook with laughter. I laughed too, for just at that moment I caught sight of myself in a looking glass. I forbear to describe my dirty face, and my wind-blown hair, or the curious combination of a panama hat and a big winter overcoat. I am sufficiently ludicrous in appearance at any time. A little girl once introduced herself to me on the sea-shore, and five minutes later confided to me. " I do love you so ; you are just like my Golliwog."

Presently the sound of the smiling was taken by the more welcome sound of the rattling of plates and the clinking of knives and forks. I was led back to the living-room, and I seated myself at the round family table. The three females placed themselves on a long bench opposite and stared in stony silence. In front of me was spread a number of dishes. I tried the nearest. It was not salt fish. I had had salt fish before. This was solid salt relieved with a flavour of fish. Fish is a staple article of food in the country, and the waters yield a never-failing supply. Tons of fish are salted for winter use, and enormous quantities are exported to Russia. I munched a bit of dry rye-bread. It was brown, sour, and hard, a kind of vinegar-soaked stone quoit. I

fell upon the oat-cake. It had the flavour of aniseed and the texture of leather. My last hope lay in certain brown, pasty-looking slabs. I took little bits and discovered a new variety of sausage-meat. Now I have eaten meats of doubtful origin in Canton, and I have fed on Corsican mutton that was goat, and many other varieties of foreign flesh, but I have an unconquerable aversion to all forms of foreign sausage, owing to the multifarious and indeterminate character of the ingredients. But this time I was desperate, and I had consumed two of the pasty slabs before I drew up and thought of the morrow. Fortunately there was an abundance of butter and milk. I seized the jug of milk and drank the thick, creamy fluid till I could drink no longer. While I was making these gustatory experiments the ladies left the room, not altogether, but one after the other, and not slowly, but in an undignified hurry. They could contain themselves no longer. When I had finished, I hammered on the table and my hostess reappeared. I held out one mark in payment. She returned me sixty cents. "Well," thought I to myself, "if this supper prove fatal to my youthful existence (I'm not really youthful; I'm over forty), then I have purchased a cheap farewell to all my potential greatness."

I strolled back to the boat, but there was no one moving, so I entered the little cabin and stretched myself out on the bench. I soon fell fast asleep. When I awoke it was half-past three in the morning, and the hooter was being blown

preparatory to making a fresh start. The next time I awoke it was five o'clock and I was back in Kajana. We had done the last part of the journey, about a quarter of the total distance, in an hour and three quarters. Altogether I suppose we had travelled about sixty miles, and we had spent eighteen hours over it. I could have walked it in the time—a few years ago. But the Finns are a wise people in more ways than one, and in none wiser than this, that they move slowly. There is a world of practical wisdom enshrined in their two familiar sayings, "God did not make hurry," and "Time is always before one."

I was puzzled to know what to do at five o'clock in the morning, and a Sunday morning to boot. My previous experience of this restful land told me that no one in the hotel would be likely to be up at that hour. I got back to the hotel, looked at the sleepy frontage and sighed. I strolled down to the river bank, lit my pipe, and let the rushing water preach to me its eternal Sabbath message of the beauty of the earth. When I saw the women come out with their birch brooms and begin to sweep the roads, I got up and went back to the hotel. I tried the front door. It was unlocked. I entered. There was no one stirring. I tried the next door; unlocked also. I went to my bedroom; the doors and windows were wide open, just as I had left them the day before. I need not have waited so long by the river-side in the cool and the rain.

XXXVIII

IN A FINNISH CAFÉ

THERE is, in the southern part of Finland, a long narrow ridge of sand and pebbles known as Punkaharju, or "The Hog's Back." It can be reached by many different routes, but the wise traveller, in this land of a myriad water-ways, goes wherever he can by boat. My own trip to the famous ridge was made from Nyslott, a small town that lies like a water bird on the bosom of the waters.

The journey from Nyslott to Punkaharju is one of great beauty, amongst islands some of which are wooded to the water's edge, while others are as bare as a clean dinner plate. They are of all sizes, some being so small and brown that they look like little bits of stick. On the mainland, the forests that clothe the land over hundreds of square miles have disappeared in places, and patches of cultivated green shine brightly amongst the dark-hued pines. Primitive landing stages, that hardly deserve the name, are very numerous. They wear a merry appearance in the sunlight, but one cannot help thinking that the houses they serve must be desolate enough in the winter. Groups of children at isolated spots give a much

needed touch of domesticity to the landscape. The passage for the steamer is often a mere trough whose course is marked with hundreds of posts, and so narrow that you can sometimes touch the posts as you pass, and see the rocks close up against the side of the boat.

On reaching Punkaharju, everybody makes for the little hotel which is the property of the State, as is also the " Jewel of Finland " that I had gone to visit. This jewel is a long, narrow ridge, four or five miles in length, between two lakes. The hog's back is broken in three places, two of which have been bridged over, while the third is crossed by means of a horse ferry. The ridge has the appearance of an artificial embankment, except in those parts where it is thickly wooded. Its surface is, for the most part, as level as it would have been had it been laid out by surveyors, though there are undulating sections where a height of a hundred feet is reached. There is, all the same, nothing artificial about Punkaharju. It is the product of glacial action in bygone days, and is merely the finest example of many other similar ridges, or *eskers*, as the geologists call them, which are to be found in other parts of the country.

I avoided the hotel, and set out to walk the whole length of the back of the hog. Almost everywhere the ridge is bordered with pine and birch, and through the stems of the trees one catches delightful glimpses of the fascinating lake world beyond. Every step opens up a new pano-

rama of blue water, sombre pine and ruddy rock, over which there is stillness and a peace that tunes the mind to the contemplation of an eternal Sabbath. I strolled on through the leafy aisles of one of Nature's most imposing cathedrals, turning aside from time to time to admire and photograph, careless of the passing of the hours.

About six o'clock I arrived at Punkasalmi, the station from which I proposed to return. The train did not leave till eight, and that meant no food at Nyslott till after ten. As far as I could see, Punkasalmi consisted of a farm-house and a station, neither of which was of any use to me. I struck into a country road and wandered on to a collection of small log huts not very far away. The first hasty glance revealed little that offered encouragement to a hungry man, but a more careful inspection discovered the word *Kahvila* attached to one of the cottages. My knowledge of foreign tongues, though somewhat limited, was of sufficient extent to allow of the recognition of the word Kahvila as the local representation of *Café*. I opened the garden gate and walked timidly to the cottage door. I hesitated about knocking, because of my inability to explain my wants. But my footsteps had disturbed a dog, who set up an unpleasant demonstration, and brought a woman to the door. As she stood expectantly before me, all I could say was "Café ?"

Her reply was in the affirmative, and she motioned me to enter. Her little habitation contained two rooms, both of them spotlessly clean. In the

first, or living-room, the most conspicuous object was an enormous brick stove. An elderly woman, evidently weak from age and sickness, was moving uneasily on a couch. Both the women were barefooted. Round the walls was a white wooden bench. There were several tables and chairs, roughly fashioned of local woods, and there was a sweet, cleanly, rustic smell about the room. The heat from the stove was oppressive, and I was not sorry when I was shown into the second and smaller apartment.

Here, as in the first, there were a number of growing plants, a feature, as I afterwards found, of almost constant occurrence in all classes of Finnish homes. In the room into which I had been shown, were crowded many of the luxuries and some of the necessities of the family. It was evidently used as a bedroom, and the bed itself was made to slide up like a telescope in the daytime, in order to reduce the space it occupied. There was a sewing machine of American make, a bookcase filled chiefly with religious works, a whole gallery of family portraits, and many dishes of fresh flowers. The hat rack was the branch of a tree nailed to the wall. Indeed, one of the most pleasing things about this humble dwelling was the use made of the forest in furnishing the house. The walls and ceiling were of wood, unpolished, unvarnished, unpainted—absolutely beautiful in their simplicity and cleanliness. The floor had been polished, probably because the inhabitants of the cottage were in the habit of going about

bare-footed. Birch had been used in the construction of a three-legged table, a four-branched stand for flower pots, sundry picture frames, and a towel rail. The wood was in the natural condition, with its silvery bark brightening and adorning the surface.

The various articles of metal that were hung upon the walls were as bright as elbow grease could make them. In the cottages of the poor there are no finer ornaments than brilliant pots and pans. They are the tributes paid by those of cleanly habits to the goddess of the fireside, memorials of labour wisely and willingly bestowed. The white metallic coffee set that was brought to me upon the white metallic tray, shone so obtrusively as to be a striking reproach to my own uncleanliness, for I had not washed for nearly ten hours. The coffee served was excellent. I do not exaggerate when I say that better could not be obtained in Paris. Thick cream and a plate of sweet bread and biscuits made up the rest of the decorations on the polished tray, and the cost of the meal was fourpence.

This out-of-the-world café is typical of the dwellings of the Finnish peasant. Everywhere you find the big stove and the warm chimney corner. The houses are built of wood, and are generally one storey high, with the rooms leading from one to the other. The open rafters of the roof are used as a combined wardrobe, store cupboard, and general repository for fishing tackle and gardening implements. The beds slide up like

telescopes or hide themselves in the drawers of capacious chests of drawers. Cleanliness is as much a distinction as convenience. The very oldest dwellings, of which few now remain, were less clean, for there were no chimneys, and the confined smoke left dirty marks wherever it laid its sooty fingers. The smoke of the juniper wood that was burnt to overpower the insects was, in such places, responsible for the prevalence of different forms of eye trouble. As to these insects much has been said and written. Some travellers have described the various rooms as being infested with numerous varieties of sleep disturbing fiends. I slept in many kinds of rooms and houses, and I can honestly say that I suffered no inconvenience whatever, though whether this was due to the absence of the insects, the depth of my slumbers, or the thickness of my skin, I am unable to determine.

I went back from Punkasalmi by train. On the opposite seat were two university students, one a male and the other a female, hand in hand. They were not talking logically, or thinking mathematically, that I'll wager. They were probably just then as near being poets as they will ever be in their lives. I was somewhat surprised at their behaviour, because I had read in a book written by a Finnish lady that unmarried girls in Finland do not go out alone with young men. Perhaps these two were brother and sister, or perhaps the rule only applies to the higher classes. If so, then I'd rather not belong to the higher classes.

XXXIX

A VISIT TO A FINNISH FARM

THE farm was Finnish, but the hostess was English, and I, a lone and weary traveller, arrived at the station of Uusikirkko, somewhere near the Russian frontier, very early one summer morning on a visit to the lady and her farm. My box was thrown out on the platform with that peculiar tenderness that characterizes the actions of all railway porters. As I could not speak a word of any of the local dialects, I promptly sat on the box and awaited developments. Nothing developed. I went up to an official and mentioned the name of my hostess. He replied in several tongues. I repeated the name of the lady in English. We alternated in this way for several minutes, after which three other officials were summoned, and a very animated discussion ensued. Having stirred up some interest in myself and my property, I sat down on the box again, listened to the conversation, and silently munched biscuits the while. Occasionally the excited gentleman turned to me and asked me questions. To each and all of them I answered, "Mrs. A—r."

Now, I had been informed that a man would be sent to the station to meet me. There were many

men at the station, and they all spoke to me, so I could not discover the one who was specially interested in my visit. I began to feel confused and idiotic with my continual repetition of a lady's name. Besides, it did not sound very respectful to my hostess. I played every tune I could on it, accented it, toned it and put it into major, minor, and Straussian scales. Suddenly two of the porters seized my box and went off with it at a rapid trot. Always follow your luggage! They put it in a small carriage and I got in beside it. There was not much room for me, and in order to make my position secure I embraced as much as I could of the box, with both arms. My appearance now corresponded to my speech—singular and distressed. People laughed. Had it been in an English village the spectators would probably have thrown stones. The driver mounted the box, whipped up the pony, and away we went over one of the worst specimens of a country road I have ever encountered, even in Finland. The coachman—Paul was his name—looked a fairly untamed specimen of humanity, except for a decided tendency to laugh. I had never seen such a cheery kind of barbarian before. The drive was full of excitement. The carriage was hardly ever horizontal, and the luggage and I played a wrestling match from start to finish. When the box was not on the top of me, I was on the top of the box. Every time I got up from under my impedimenta, there, sure enough, was Paul looking at me, his bearded face wreathed in smiles. When I bounced

up and down like an india-rubber ball to the detriment of my temper and the discomfort of my person he chuckled audibly. When he nearly ran over a little dog his merriment increased, and when his own dog chased some chickens and made them fly over a fence he rolled about in his excitement. He was a wonderfully merry man. All this time I had not the remotest idea where I was going. My pronunciation of a lady's name might have suggested some other lady's name, or even some distant inland village where my unexpected and inexplicable advent would result in experiences of an unrestful type. But somehow I had confidence in Paul, and I made up my mind if anything went wrong I would cling to the merry man, even if I had to forsake my belongings. As it turned out, he was the real right man after all, and was taking me to the house to which I had been invited. When he deposited me at the front door he was brimming over with glee, and pointed me out to the female servants with great enjoyment. I wonder what Paul's face would look like if the smiles came out.

To understand Finnish farming we have to take into consideration certain climatic conditions with which we are ourselves unfamiliar. The winter lasts for six long months—from November to April. The other three seasons are distributed amongst the remaining six months. During the winter the whole land lies buried under snow that, even in the south, is rarely less than six feet deep. Daylight lasts from ten till two, and is not always

worth calling daylight. The ice-fiend holds the land in his grip, and rivers and lakes, and even the very sea itself, are frozen over. There are roads across the ice from Finland to Sweden and Esthonia. Wheeled vehicles give place to sledges, and railway engines are fitted with snow ploughs.

Spring comes suddenly, and is followed immediately by a short summer, during which the heat at midday is so intense that on the Arctic Circle it is almost impossible to face it without great discomfort. The forest bursts into leaf, wild flowers spring up as if by magic, birds and insects appear from winter quarters, and the air is full of the fragrance of the pine trees and the whispering of the birch. As if to make up for the length of the winter months and the shortness of the winter days, the nights take upon themselves something of the character of the day. The evening light is that of the early morn, and the last flush of the twilight is so akin to the first pale colour of the dawn that without a watch you could scarcely tell which was which. Rest and peace descend upon the earth, and the weird character of the light, and the tints assumed by all things earthly under its softening and unearthly influence, fill the mind with inexpressible suggestions of the mysterious and the infinite.

The only plants which can be profitably grown under Finnish conditions are such as will ripen rapidly—certain kinds of fruits, vegetables, and grasses, the latter including such hardy cereals as oats and rye. North of Uleaborg orchard fruits

will not ripen, but raspberries and strawberries grow everywhere, and some luscious wild fruits are even confined to this wild north. The further north we go, the longer the summer day becomes, and the concentration of the light in this way causes extremely rapid growth. Grain can be sown, grown, and harvested in twelve weeks. Further south sixteen or seventeen weeks are necessary. But the character of the climate is not the only drawback to agriculture. With the exception of one province—Osterbotten—the rest of the land is covered with a continuous forest, and before plants can be grown the forest must be destroyed. The earlier methods of clearing the ground were fairly barbarous. The trees were simply burned down and the grain planted in the ashes. This is usually referred to as the Sved method of cultivation, but it has nothing to do with Sweden, and existed long before the Swedes conquered the country. The soil obtained in this way was very rich, and would yield harvests for three years. After that, another patch was burned down, and the young trees and shrubs sprang up again in the ground from which they had been displaced. This wasteful method of cultivation has now practically disappeared, as the Government has taken steps to prevent the wholesale destruction of so much valuable forest land.

Having got rid of the forest, the ground can be cultivated. I saw nothing original or exciting in connexion with the planting of cabbages, but was

much interested in the ingathering of the hay. Finnish grass is like English grass, and not being an expert I failed to distinguish much difference between the field implements used in the two countries. But the Finnish method of drying grass struck me as a novel one, though I have since learned that it is common enough in many other parts of Europe. Roughly speaking, the grass is hung up on hat pegs and clothes lines. The hat pegs are arranged on the side of a tall pole, and when they have been covered with hay the result is a series of more or less cylindrical and attenuated hayricks. The clothes lines are of wood, supported on poles. A considerable amount of ingenuity is shown in the erection of these structures, for there is neither iron nail nor wooden peg, nor any form of tying, either with wire, rope, or fibre. The poles support each other without constraint. By whatever means the grass is exposed to the four winds of heaven, drying is much more rapid than if it be allowed to lie upon the ground. The outer layers protect the inner ones, and a day's heavy rain has little or no effect upon the interior of the pile. When the hay is ready it is carried away on sledges to be stored, not in ricks, but in huge wooden sheds, where it can be got at when the snow comes.

Oats will not ripen in the open air, and are dried and ripened by artificial heat in wooden sheds that resemble those used for storing hay, except that a black mark on the exterior affords the necessary means of identification. The usual

hours of work are from six o'clock to eight, then from nine till one, and finally from three till eight. Formerly the farm hands worked from five in the morning till eight in the evening in summer, and from eight till five in the winter. In the dark months the men have to feed the cattle, attend to the forest, and make and repair the wooden buildings and implements belonging to the farm.

Paul drove me to the station when I left Uusikirkko. He was still smiling, and though I may never see his merry twinkle any more, I am sure I shall never forget the hearty way in which he shook hands with me at parting, or the wondrous tones in which he wished me a merry time for the future.

EPILOGUE

"When I came to my chambers, I writ down these minutes; but I was at a loss what instruction I should propose to my reader from the enumeration of so many insignificant matters and occurrences; and I thought it of great use, if they could learn with me to keep their minds open to gratification, and ready to receive it from anything it meets with. This one circumstance will make every face you see give you the satisfaction you now take in beholding that of a friend; will make every object a pleasing one; will make all the good which arrives to any man, an increase of happiness to yourself."—*Steele.*

INDEX

Abo, 264, 266.
Aden, 255.
Aggstein, 158.
Ajaccio, 75, 79, 84, 114.
Aleria, 90, 92, 100.
Alexandria, 250.
Alkmaar, 42, 44.
Amsterdam, 42, 43.
Aspern, 161.
Athenaeum, 211.

Baden, 121.
Balkans, 177.
Bangkok, 65.
Basel, 121, 124.
Bastia, 94, 111.
Batoum, 198.
Belgrade, 172, 176, 180.
Bitter Lakes, 254.
Black Forest, 126.
Bonifacio, 95.
Bratish, 193.
Bucharest, 211.
Buda, 166.
Budapest, 160.

Calvi, 102, 103, 108.
Canton, 230.
Chincha, 243.
Cho Sing, 235.
Cologne, 124.
Corsica, 75.
Corté, 82, 83, 84, 89, 90.

Delft, 42.
Dordrecht, 41.
Drave, 172.
Durnstein, 159.

Elba, 115.
Essling, 161.
Esthonia, 321.
Esztergon, 165.

Fat Katerina, 283.
Flowery Forest Temple, 229.
Flushing, 41.
Freiburg, 124, 132.
Freinburg, 149.

Galatz, 185, 191, 197.
Garden of Camoens, 247.
Ghisonaccia, 94.
Grand Square, 252.
Grein, 157.
Grotto of Camoens, 248.
Gulf of Finland, 280.
Gulf of Siam, 54.
Gulf of Suez, 254.

Haarlem, 43.
Hague, 42.
Heidelburg, 124, 127.
Helsingfors, 266, 271.
Hong Kong, 230, 242, 246.
Hungarian Gate, 165.

Ijmuiden, 43.
Imatra, 289, 292, 293, 295, 296.
Iron Gates, 187.
Isacea, 199.

Kajana, 302, 303, 306.
Karelia, 283.
Karelians, 5.
Katwyk, 42.
Kazan, 185.

Khlong Bang Luang, 61.
Kolosseum, 146.

Ladoga, 3, 5, 12.
Lake of Diana, 92.
Leiden, 42.
Le Vieux Port, 117.
Linz, 141, 148, 152.
Little Carpathians, 165.
Lobau, 161.
Lojo, 270, 274, 275.
Longevity Lane, 228.

Macao, 239.
Mannheim, 121, 124.
Marken, 42.
Mauthausen, 155.
Middleburg, 41.
Mohacs, 168.
Monte Grosso, 110.

Neckar Valley, 127.
Neuhaus, 145.
Nyslott, 312, 314.

Obor, 215.
Odessa, 198.
Ontojoki, 307.
Osterbotten, 322.

Paoli, 89.
Passau, 135, 137.
Pearl River, 237.
Peking, 240, 244.
Perim, 256.
Pest, 166.
Peterwardein, 172.
Place Letitia, 78.
Plain of Hungary, 164, 167.
Porto Vecchio, 95, 96.
Port Said, 253.
Postlingberg, 150.
Pressburg, 165.
Pruth, 199.
Punkaharju, 312, 313.
Punkasalmi, 314, 317.

Rattijarvi, 289, 291.
Red Sea, 255.
Reni, 199.
Rotterdam, 41, 43.
Rustchuk, 187.

Saima Canal, 289, 290.
Saint Croix, 116.
Savolaks, 269.
Scheveningen, 42.
Schwarzwald, 122.
Semlin, 172, 173.
Siam, 51, 225.
Sortavala, 3, 5.
Sot Kamo, 302, 306, 308.
Stadium, 171.
Strasburg, 124.
Stretta, 112.
Suez, 254.
Suez Canal, 253, 254.
Sulina, 198, 201, 203.

Tachin, 62.
Tavignano, 90.
Timor, 248.
Trebizond, 198.
Triberg, 124.
Tulcea, 198, 200.

Uleaborg, 321.
Usikirkko, 318, 324.
Utrecht, 43.

Valladolid, 109.
Viborg, 280, 283, 286, 287.
Villa Milelli, 80.
Visegrad, 166.
Volendam, 42.
Vuoksen, 293.

Wagram, 161.
Walamo, 3, 12, 30, 33, 34.
Wallinkoski, 289, 295, 296.
Wat Chang, 226.
Wat Poh, 227.
Wesanto, 297.

Ziegelhausen, 127, 129.
Zimony, 174.

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